This Old House

Organize everything! Pros share their best tips p.72

TILE *our homeowners saved $1,629*

28 creative ways to save

+ POCKET $53 A WEEK WITH OUR ADVICE (p.48)

SHELF *saved $178*

Shh... HOW TO BUILD A SECRET DOOR

TUB *saved $4,200*

GET THIS LOOK!

MODERN BATH FOR A VINTAGE HOUSE

26 BUTCHER-BLOCK COUNTERTOP IDEAS p.84

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015
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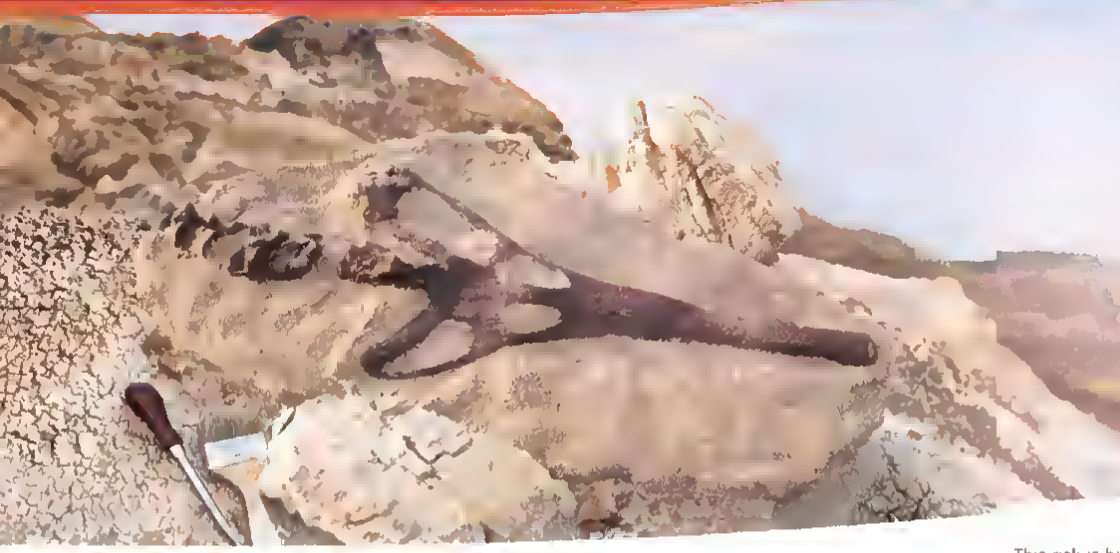
For people with a higher risk of stroke due to
Atrial Fibrillation (AFib) not caused by a heart valve problem



I was taking warfarin. But ELIQUIS was a better find.

I TAKE ELIQUIS® (apixaban) FOR 3 GOOD REASONS:

1. ELIQUIS reduced the risk of stroke better than warfarin.
2. ELIQUIS had less major bleeding than warfarin.
3. Unlike warfarin, there's no routine blood testing.

ELIQUIS and other blood thinners increase the risk of bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death

Ask your doctor if ELIQUIS is right for you.

ELIQUIS® (apixaban) is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation, a type of irregular heartbeat, not caused by a heart valve problem.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

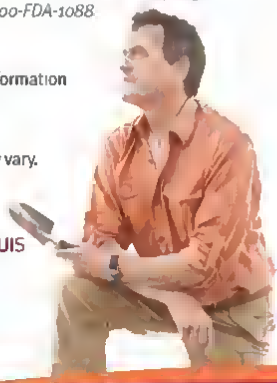
- **Do not stop taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke.** ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.
- **ELIQUIS can cause bleeding, which can be serious,** and rarely may lead to death.
- **You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS** and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, NSAIDs, warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, SSRIs or SNRIs, and other blood thinners. **Tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins and supplements you take.** While taking ELIQUIS, you may bruise more easily and it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop.
- Get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:
  - unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as unusual bleeding from the gums; nosebleeds that happen often, or menstrual or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
  - bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
  - red, pink, or brown urine, red or black stools (looks like tar)
  - coughing up or vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
  - unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain, headaches, feeling dizzy or weak
- **ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves.**
- **Spinal or epidural blood clots (hematoma).** People who take ELIQUIS, and have medicine injected into their spinal and epidural area, or have a spinal puncture have a risk of forming a blood clot that can cause long-term or permanent loss of the ability to move (paralysis). This risk is higher if, an epidural catheter is placed in your back to give you certain medicine, you take NSAIDs or blood thinners, you have a history of difficult or repeated epidural or spinal punctures. Tell your doctor right away if you have tingling, numbness, or muscle weakness, especially in your legs and feet.
- **Before you take ELIQUIS,** tell your doctor if you have kidney or liver problems, any other medical condition, or ever had bleeding problems. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant or breastfeed.
- **Do not take ELIQUIS if you** currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding or have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. A reaction to ELIQUIS can cause hives, rash, itching, and possibly trouble breathing. Get medical help right away if you have sudden chest pain or chest tightness, have sudden swelling of your face or tongue, have trouble breathing, wheezing, or feeling dizzy or faint.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see additional Important Product Information on the adjacent page

Individual results may vary.

Visit ELIQUIS.COM or call 1-855-ELIQUIS



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Eliquis®
(apixaban) tablets 5mg 2.5mg

IMPORTANT FACTS about ELIQUIS® (apixaban) tablets

℞ ONLY

The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional. Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how ELIQUIS may fit into your overall therapy. Talk to your healthcare professional if you have any questions about ELIQUIS (pronounced ELL eh kwiss).

What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS (apixaban)?

For people taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation: Do not stop taking ELIQUIS without talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping ELIQUIS increases your risk of having a stroke. ELIQUIS may need to be stopped, prior to surgery or a medical or dental procedure. Your doctor will tell you when you should stop taking ELIQUIS and when you may start taking it again. If you have to stop taking ELIQUIS, your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help prevent a blood clot from forming.

ELIQUIS can cause bleeding which can be serious, and rarely may lead to death. This is because ELIQUIS is a blood thinner medicine that reduces blood clotting.

You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take ELIQUIS and take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (called NSAIDs), warfarin (COUMADIN®), heparin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), and other medicines to help prevent or treat blood clots.

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one listed above.

While taking ELIQUIS

- you may bruise more easily
- it may take longer than usual for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding when taking ELIQUIS:

- unexpected bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
  - unusual bleeding from the gums
  - nosebleeds that happen often
  - menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is severe or you cannot control
- red, pink, or brown urine
- red or black stools (looks like tar)
- cough up blood or blood clots
- vomit blood or your vomit looks like coffee grounds
- unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain
- headaches, feeling dizzy or weak

ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves

Spinal or epidural blood clots (hematoma)
People who take a blood thinner medicine (anticoagulant) like ELIQUIS, and have medicine injected into their spinal and epidural area, or have a spinal puncture have a risk of forming a blood clot that can cause long-term or permanent loss of the ability to move (paralysis). Your risk of developing a spinal or epidural blood clot is higher if:

- a thin tube called an epidural catheter is placed in your back to give you certain medicine
- you take NSAIDs or a medicine to prevent blood from clotting
- you have a history of difficult or repeated epidural or spinal punctures
- you have a history of problems with your spine or have had surgery on your spine

If you take ELIQUIS (apixaban) and receive spinal anesthesia or have a spinal puncture, your doctor should watch you closely for symptoms of spinal or epidural blood clots or bleeding. Tell your doctor right away if you have tingling, numbness or muscle weakness, especially in your legs and feet.

What is ELIQUIS?
ELIQUIS is a prescription medicine used to:

- reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have atrial fibrillation
- reduce the risk of forming a blood clot in the legs and lungs of people who have just had hip or knee replacement surgery
- treat blood clots in the veins of your legs (deep vein thrombosis) or lungs (pulmonary embolism), and reduce the risk of them occurring again.

It is not known if ELIQUIS is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take ELIQUIS?
Do not take ELIQUIS if you:

- currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding
- have had a serious allergic reaction to ELIQUIS. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.

What should I tell my doctor before taking ELIQUIS?
Before you take ELIQUIS, tell your doctor if you:

- have kidney or liver problems
- have any other medical condition
- have ever had bleeding problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ELIQUIS will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ELIQUIS passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take ELIQUIS or breastfeed. You should not do both.

Tell all of your doctors and dentists that you are taking ELIQUIS. They should talk to the doctor who prescribed ELIQUIS for you, before you have any surgery, medical or dental procedure.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over the counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way ELIQUIS (apixaban) works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding or stroke when taken with ELIQUIS.

How should I take ELIQUIS?
Take ELIQUIS exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Take ELIQUIS twice every day with or without food, and do not change your dose or stop taking it unless your doctor tells you to. If you miss a dose of ELIQUIS, take it as soon as you remember, and do not take more than one dose at the same time. **Do not run out of ELIQUIS. Refill your prescription before you run out.** When leaving the hospital following hip or knee replacement, be sure that you will have ELIQUIS available to avoid missing any doses. **If you are taking ELIQUIS for atrial fibrillation, stopping ELIQUIS may increase your risk of having a stroke.**

What are the possible side affects of ELIQUIS?

- See **"What is the most important information I should know about ELIQUIS?"**
- ELIQUIS can cause a skin rash or severe allergic reaction. Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
  - chest pain or tightness
  - swelling of your face or tongue
  - trouble breathing or wheezing
  - feeling dizzy or faint

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all of the possible side effects of ELIQUIS. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about ELIQUIS. For more information, talk with your doctor or pharmacist. call 1-855-ELIQUIS (1-855-354-7847), or go to www.ELIQUIS.com

Manufactured by:
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
Princeton, New Jersey 08543 USA
Marketed by
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
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This independent, non-profit organization provides assistance to qualifying patients with financial hardship who generally have no prescription insurance. Contact 1 800 736 0003 or visit www.bmspaf.org for more information.

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August 2014
432US14BR00720-07-01

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Cover Photograph by DEBORAH WHITLAW LLEWELLYN
Styling by BRIAN CARTER

PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBORAH WHITLAW LLEWELLYN (BOTTOM); STYLED BY BRIAN CARTER

Budget-minded trade-offs:

TILE. Simple oversize ceramic subway tile at **$3.32** per square foot instead of glossier same-size porcelain tile at **$15** per square foot.

SHELF. A shallow **$49** aluminum picture ledge instead of a deeper aluminum shelf with a lip for **$27**.

TUB. A 61-inch hollow-walled acrylic tub at **$1,429** instead of a 70-inch solid surface model that costs **$6,650**.

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Watch videos and see more photos!
Now on the iPad the Nook and other select tablets. Available at **thisoldhouse.com/tablet** and on iTunes

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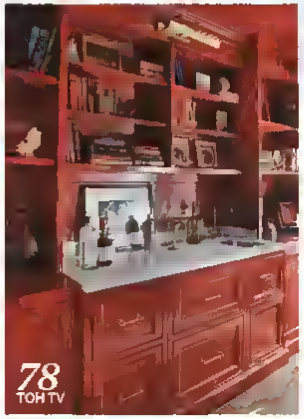

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Keep it simple—and save

What's in the new edition of *TOH?*" my wife asked me.

"Well, there's a story about little ways to save big," I said.

She said, "You should make sure to read it. Or maybe you should tell people about the big ways you lose big. They could learn from your mistakes..."

We were passing the time, huddled under a blanket in the cold, waiting for the technician to come fix our heat. The nine-zone, hot water, radiator and in-floor-radiant high-efficiency system I was so excited to have—and, at least right now, the most urgent of my mistakes.

I guess you never save big when your heating system is so complicated that not only can you not fix it yourself but the usual repairman or repairwoman can't fix it either. No, you've got to call in a technician.

The only real difference I can see between a technician and a repairperson, by the way, is the bill's extra column of numbers, which tends to eliminate any savings the zones and the high efficiency were supposed to provide.

"At least the air-conditioning works well," I wanted to say, but the room was already icy enough.

The fact is, though, my wife was right. Savings should not have to be high effort. That just makes it too hard. A not too hot, not too cold approach that's just right is what you want, and, not coincidentally, I think that's captured perfectly in "Small Steps to Big Savings," on page 48 of this issue.

"Did you know that dust can reduce light from a bulb by 30 percent?" I said to her, thinking about Tip No. 2, which immediately led to a recollection of Mistake No. 2.

"You mean if we'd had a box of Swiffers before our remodel, I'd have to buy only 10 bulbs instead of 15 for the fixtures in the kitchen?" she said.

"Um, yeah," I said.

So there you go. The big ways I've lost big. My service to you. Also my service: the savings story. Follow its advice and you could save yourself $75,403! Which is either just enough to pay for a technician late on a cold Sunday night or for a down payment on keeping your marriage warm and toasty.

SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com

More great stuff

As soon as we finished the TOH Top 100 (thisoldhouse.com/top100) we discovered even more products we love—like SimpliSafe, a DIY home security system that you build with its wireless motion detectors, smoke detectors, and such. Now we have a place for these finds, in the new Editors' Picks column. See them on page 96.

HELP WANTED?

TUNE IN TO ask This Old House

Catch us as we travel the country helping people like you tackle everyday home improvement problems.

To watch full episodes, check air times in your area or submit your own home improvement question, visit thisoldhouse.com/watchASKTOH

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Reader mail

THE ANNUAL READER-CREATED ISSUE *has become a perennial favorite. Many of you expressed appreciation for your fellow readers' shared wisdom and finished (for now) remodels and even added your own tips. Plus, check out a cabinet project inspired by a photo from the August 2014 issue.*

TOH reader brain trust

The October 2014 *TOH* Reader Created Issue was the best issue yet! What a great format, and we gained lots of good tips and knowledge from our fellow readers.

—ANNA MARIE HICKS FAIRFAX COUNTY VA.

Sucking up stingers

[Re "23 Reader Tips That Save You Time and Money," October 2014], I have been using my wet/dry vac to eliminate wasps for years. One key point to add: You must spray an insecticide, preferably outdoors, into the tube. Counting on the turbulence alone to kill the wasps will not work. (I found this out early! When I lifted off the top, they came out in waves!) After a suitable period, dump the contents of the vac into a large plastic bag and discard.

—STEVE HORTON CHARLOTTESVILLE VA.

No more tepid showers

The shower in our new bath wasn't delivering enough hot water. I was considering my next step when the October issue arrived, and I read the Ask This Old House question (page 101) that addressed that very problem. So I took apart the shower valve, as described, and was able to see and resolve the problem in minutes. Now our shower can really steam things up!

—DOUG ZIMMER ABERDEEN WASH

Save This Old House updates

TOH was reading my mind! I have often wondered what becomes of the houses featured in Save This Old House. So many great homes and, of course, day-dreams of *If only we had the money or lived in that area*

—SHERRY GILLINGHAM TUCSON ARIZ

READER PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Wire-front display

CHARLIE JUDSON SMITHTOWN N.Y.

My wife, Diane, frequently shows me photos in your magazine for inspiration to build additions to our home. The cabinet with the chicken-wire door panel on page 69 of the August 2014 issue [far right] caught her eye. I had to scale the size to our available wall space, but we are very pleased with the results. Thank you for the ideas and inspiration!

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TOH TOP 100

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Find all the editors' picks of the best new home products of 2014 for sale in our online store. Go to **thisoldhouse.com/top100** to shop now

Plan ahead

Read our complete remodeling guides before you

- Redo a bathroom
- Remodel a kitchen
- Finish a basement

and more!

thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015

HOW TO VIDEO

Install crown molding like a pro

Get tips and tricks from *TOH* general contractor Tom Silva on the right way to cut crown molding, create a tight joint, and attach it to walls for an easy upgrade. **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015**

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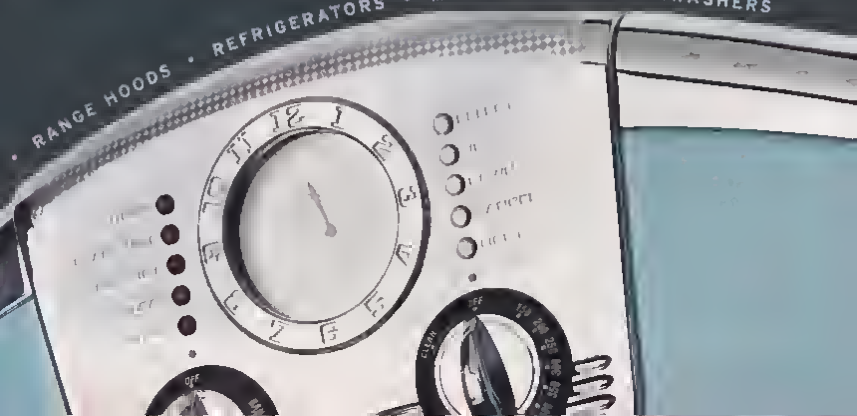

Checklist

Easy ways to improve your home right now

6 EASY FIXES

☐ **Give heaters a hand**
Make sure heat vents registers and radiators are free of obstructions for optimal comfort and efficiency

☐ **Organize loose paperwork**
Upgrade any appliances this season? Gather the warranties and receipts and start a binder, making sure to include each item's serial number

☐ **Prevent burst pipes**
To protect plumbing that runs through an exterior wall, let faucets drip or run at a trickle to keep water flowing (rather than freezing) when temps dip below 32°

☐ **Adjust your floodlights**
They're probably angled over the driveway, but positioning them over potential hiding spots, like recesses and shrubs can help discourage prowlers

☐ **Keep rooms cozy**
In rooms where you spend the most time, add rubber sweeps to interior doors to trap heat.

☐ **Check radon levels**
Home tests work best when the house is sealed up, so now's the time. Learn where to get a kit at epa.gov/radon

☑ Shut out squirrels

These critters are gearing up for their first litter of the year, so they're searching for cozy nesting spots—like your house. To keep them from breaking in, ID possible entry points by turning off the lights in attics, garages, and crawl spaces during the day and checking for spots of sun shining through. If there's no sign of animal activity, cover entry points with ¼-inch hardware cloth. Got squatters? Wait until they leave to seal the place up, or call in a local wildlife control company.

☐ Make good on home-improvement resolutions

Map out a plan for what you want to accomplish over the coming year. If you're tackling a sizable remodel, list all the things you'll need to do, such as getting bids from contractors—often lowest during the winter, when pros are looking for work—and applying for permits. Then break large projects into smaller ones to make tasks easier to complete. Need a nudge? Schedule your goals on the free app BrightNest for reminders.

☐ Prep a winter-weather kit

Don't get caught without a shovel in the middle of a snowstorm. Now's the time to gather snow removal gear, including a shovel and a deicer to clear the way, and an ice scraper for the car. In heavy-snowfall areas, you'll want a snowblower, too. Also include safety items—flashlights, batteries, a first-aid kit—and keep them easily accessible.

☐ Go green with the tree

Once the holidays are over, arrange to have the tree recycled; most areas will collect it for free for two weeks after Christmas. Leave it unwrapped and remove all ornaments and tinsel; otherwise it might be left behind. If you want to put the tree to work, though, we've got you covered. Find 10 clever reuse ideas at thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015

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home solutions

Edited by Michelle Brunner

INSIDE DEEP-FREEZE FIXES BETTER BEDDING EXPERT ADVICE PLANTER IDEA MORE

Stepped-up boot rack

This winter, give muddy, salt-stained floors the boot with this clever stand: a perfect resting place for wet Wellies and snowy footwear. Ours gets a stylish upgrade from a mix of turned wood stair balusters. Hit up your local salvage yard or pick up new ones at the home center, starting at $5 each. Cut the base of the balusters at a 10° angle, then attach them to a 2×6 board with lag screws, alternating the direction of the angle. Affix 2×4 feet to the base, and paint the piece an eye-catching color. Now you’ve got smart storage that’s a real kick.

SEE HOW IT’S DONE
For the complete step-by-step and a how-to video, scan this page with the Blippar app or go to thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015

Safe stepping

Winter surfaces may be slick with snow ice and slush, but these chemical free solutions will help you walk with confidence in four key danger zones

—MEGAN BAKER

FRONT ENTRY An electric doormat melts snow as it falls at a rate of up to 2 inches per hour to keep up with heavy storms. *HeatTrak 24 by 36 inch mat from $110. heattrak.com*

STOOP STAIRS Before icy weather sets in, add rubberized Ice Breaker Stair Treads to steps. In freezing weather, these cushy mats release ice with a stomp of the foot so that you can brush it away without danger. *8¾-by-36-inch mat, $14. cozywinters.com*

SIDEWALK Sure, ice melts are one way to go. Another: EcoTraction volcanic mineral granules, which embed into ice to help provide secure footing. *$18 for a 10 pound bag. amazon.com*

GARAGE FLOOR Stay steady on your feet with 3M Safety Walk Slip-Resistant General Purpose Tapes and Treads, which help lend some traction to smooth garage floors that can get slick when ice and snow melt off your car. *$64 for a 60-foot roll. shop3m.com*

Aged wood, in no time at all

Nothing matches the look and feel of vintage boards, but if your house didn't come with an old barn filled with timeworn planks, don't despair. Here are three ways to get the look of salvaged wood using lumber milled in this century. —PAUL HOPE

SHOP OLD-SCHOOL STOCK
Most boards at home centers are S4S or surface-planed smooth on all four sides. Head to your local lumberyard and ask for rough-sawn boards, which have uneven surfaces and come in true dimensional measurements—2×4s are actually 2 inches thick—just like framing lumber from the 1800s.

DISTRESS IT
Simulate wear and tear by whacking boards with a hammer, driving in and pulling out nails or tapping the sides of fasteners against planks to leave marks where natural wear patterns would occur. Finish wood with stain, then touch up indents with black stain to simulate the look of oxidation.

TRY A DIY STAIN
Some finishes can fake decades of wear in a matter of minutes. Here, we mixed ¼ cup of rusty nails with ¾ cup of vinegar and let steep for 24 hours. When applied, the solution reacts quickly with the natural tannins in the wood grain (we used oak), mimicking the weathering that occurs over many years.

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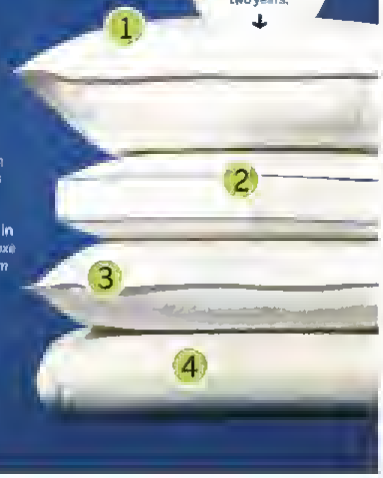
Next-gen headrests

Oh, for the days when pillow selection was as simple as firm versus soft. Today's myriad options—foam, gel, synthetic down—are enough to make anyone want to hide under the covers. We sourced and tested a number of new models. Here, four that made the cut.
—KATELIN HILL

Most doctors recommend replacing your pillow every two years.



1 Pillow within a pillow
Best for back sleepers, this unique design is filled with a down alternative. It features a polyester-fiber inner core that supports the back of your neck and an outer chamber filled with silk fibers for maximum cushiness. *Stearns & Foster Fairmont Enrapture pillow, $50; bedbathandbeyond.com*

2 Lightened-up memory foam
This design is less weighty than similar models from the past and features gusseted seams which keep your head higher to compensate for the gap between mattress and neck when you sleep on your side. *Signature Collection Side Sleeper Pillow, $30; jcp.com*

3 Wash-and-dry option
Natural down and feathers can trigger allergies, as can dust mites. This cotton-covered, polyester-microfiber-filled pillow can be laundered at high heat and comes in soft, medium, or firm. *Primaloft Deluxe pillow, from $40; thecompanystore.com*

4 Temperature control
Run hot when you sleep? This pillow has a top layer of waffle-like chambers filled with cooling gel that wicks away heat. *Technogel Classic Pillow, $170; technogel.com*

Copper-pipe log cart

Ferrying firewood to the hearth just got a lot easier with this durable cart. A sturdy plywood base rests on an open framework of copper pipes that makes loading logs a cinch. The addition of casters allows for smooth transport. It's a good way to keep smaller cuts dry and stacked in an orderly manner, and the copper is elegant enough to store hearthside even when a fire isn't blazing.

SEE HOW IT'S DONE
For the complete step-by-step and a video, scan this page with the Bippar app or go to **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015**

Should you DIY it?

You don't have to be a skilled weekend warrior to tackle some projects around the house. That said, there are certain jobs you should leave to the pros. We spoke to Robert Degni, owner of RAD General Contracting, in New York City, to get his tips on what to attempt yourself and what's best left to the experts. —PAUL HOPE

HANG DRYWALL
Go for it! Anyone has the skill to finish a basement or garage. Sheets are relatively easy to hang, but finishing with tape and joint compound can be tricky, so if you go it alone, be ready to live with a few seams or to spend a fair amount of time sanding surfaces totally smooth. "Deciding whether to hang your own drywall comes down to three things: location, patience, and expectations," says Degni.

RUN PLUMBING
Replacing fixtures is straightforward, provided you have shutoff valves and turn off the water first. Sweating and moving pipes is another story. "If you're not comfortable using a torch to solder pipes, don't try it," says Degni. It could be motivating you to DIY: offer to cut out sections of the wall where the plumber needs access to pipes. You might get a discount.

UPGRADE ELECTRICAL
Call a pro, unless it's an easy job. "An electrician can make determinations you can't," says Degni. In addition to inspecting the condition of wiring, a pro will make sure circuits aren't overloaded and can ensure your service panel will handle any new fixtures. "It's fine to swap out a light fixture, just be sure to turn off the breaker and check wiring with a circuit tester before you work," he adds.

Easy orchid pots

Don't let their exotic appearance intimidate you. Moth orchids *(Phalaenopsis)* thrive indoors during the winter and require very little TLC. They do, however, need a container with good air circulation and drainage. We love the contrast of this sophisticated flower and an aluminum bucket or can. Here's how to get the look.

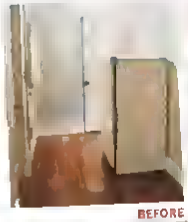
1. MAKE PILOT HOLES Hammer a nail into the side of a clean aluminum can at 2-inch intervals. Place a piece of scrap wood inside first, where you're making a hole, to prevent the can from collapsing.

2. PREP THE CONTAINER Expand the pilot holes with a drill to get the container ready for the planting material, a mix of bark and peat moss sold commercially as Orchid Bark.

3. ADD THE PLANT Place an orchid in the vessel about half filled with the mix. Top with more bark, making sure all leaves are above the top of the can to avoid rot. Place where the plant will get medium to bright light. —KATE KARAM

Stylish pantry storage for $805

Industrial shelving and vintage touches create an indispensable new larder



BEFORE

BEFORE Once the home's entry foyer, the unused space off the kitchen was bigger than a hallway but smaller than a room. **AFTER** Floor-to-ceiling shelves give the space purpose and offer lots of room to stow pantry items and small appliances. New vintage-style ceiling lights brighten the formerly dark area.

ADDING BUILT-INS IS A FOOLPROOF WAY to combine form and function in a blank space. Just ask Roeshel Summerville, whose home in Butler, Pennsylvania, featured a narrow, awkward transition area in what was once the entry foyer of the 1927 farmhouse. Since the adjacent kitchen was short on storage, Roeshel decided to put the extra space to work as a pantry. First, she had an electrician friend install, free of charge, three home-center ceiling fixtures to light the area. To avoid the mess of hard-wiring through the plaster walls, Roeshel settled on exterior wiring masked by industrial-style oil-rubbed bronze cord cover. Inspired by the new fixtures' look, she decided to create the shelves using iron pipes and pine planks. Building the unit in place, she bore holes through the front of the wood shelves to thread the pipes. The back of each shelf rests on pipe elbows, secured to the wall for support, and the whole unit is anchored to the wall at the top with flanges. Now the shelves hold the microwave and jars of dry goods. "What we lacked in the kitchen, we made up for in this area, which really wasn't being used for anything," Roeshel says. "The space has a purpose now." —MEGAN BAKER

THE PROJECT TALLY

Had an electrician friend install three semi-flush-mount lights with surface-mount wiring, which is hidden under metal channels painted with an oil-rubbed bronze finish to match the fixtures *$275*

Built shelves using iron pipes and plywood from the home center *$500*

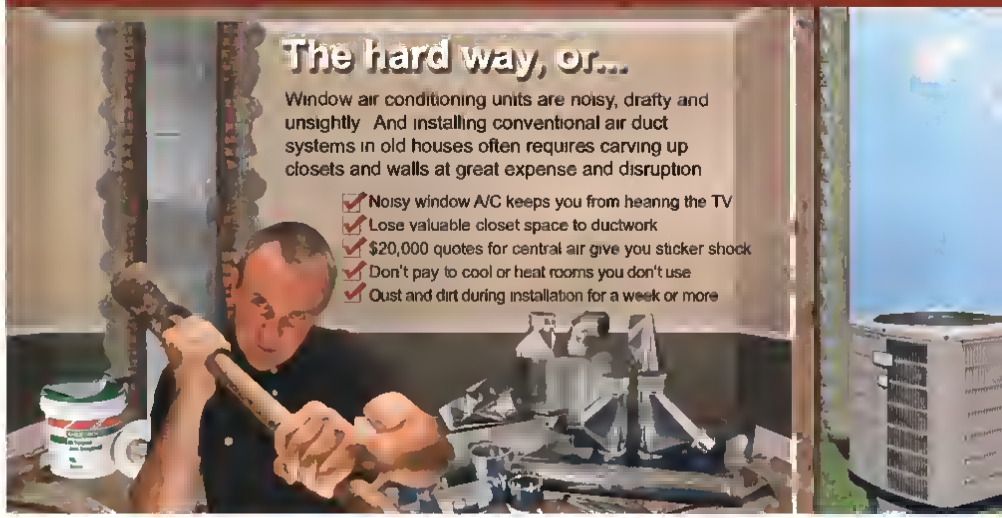
Finished wood with antiqued dark brown stain and pipes with oil-rubbed bronze spray paint *$30*

Added a lined-paper-patterned accent wall using on-hand tape and paint *$0*

TOTAL *$805*

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE DIRECTORY PAGE 101

Heating and Cooling Your Old House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Contemporary chrome lamps and glass-top tables balance out soft upholstery

Accents in bright colors provide a happy contrast to neutral hues.

A **Evan Chair** by S… B **Glass Bulb Vase** … C **Wooden Decorative Box (Set of 3)** by W… D **Brass Bowls (Set of 3)** by L… w… S… E **Torre Table Lamp** by Lite Source F **Nesting Table (Set of 2)** by W… dland Impo… ts G **Helena Vase** … H **Lovenail Cotton Pillow** by … P… … I **Columbus Table Lamp** by W… J **Opal Innocence Vase (Set of 3)** b… Le… x K **Swoop Armchair** by … y … L **Kent Storage Bench** by ange… HOME M **Charismetic Pouf Ottomen** … … ya N **Gaylyn Vase** by IMAX

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Supersizing the island

A modest expansion primes an already remodeled cook space for three-generation get-togethers

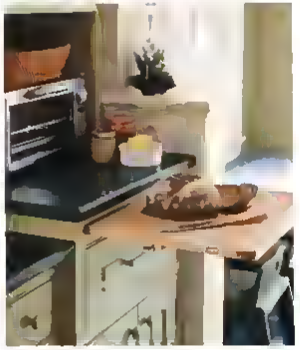
BY DEBORAH BALDWIN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY KELLER + KELLER

"IF ONLY we could squeeze in one more chair." It's a common kitchen refrain, and it certainly rang true for Marilyn and Brian Thompson. The empty nesters first updated their 1880 house, in Chatham, Massachusetts, about eight years ago. But when their posse of grandchildren swelled to seven, they longed for more elbowroom in everyone's favorite gathering spot, so they went back to the same architect, John Kuhn, and interior designer, Tina Lalonde. Kuhn designed a discreet bumpout that managed to comply with local historic guidelines while allowing for a larger island, more storage, and a kids' area. Lalonde, who had used a salvaged cupboard door as inspiration for the cabinets the first time around, loaded up the island with period details. Marilyn, a decorative painter, finished the cabinets, using a brush to get a vintage look, and gave the painted floor an updated pattern. A wider opening allows her to keep an eye on activities in adjacent spaces, but usually you'll find everyone at the island, she says, adding, "All we needed was a little more room."

BEFORE The kitchen was beautifully renovated, but the family had outgrown it. **AFTER** Homeowner Marilyn Thompson at the new, 7½-foot island. The existing cabinets and appliances stayed, while the room gained storage, seating, and a more open feel. *Cabinet paint: Benjamin Moore's Georgian Green*

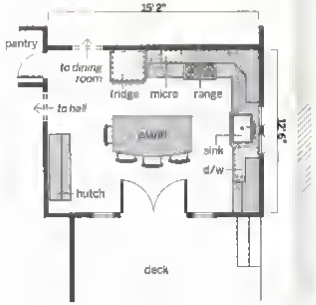
Existing cabinets in differing depths and hutch style shelves lend an assembled over time look. A pull down faucet updates the sink area. *Pendant Rejuvenation*

A built-in cutting board serves the busy breakfast station. *Cabinets. Mascaros Woodcraft Company*



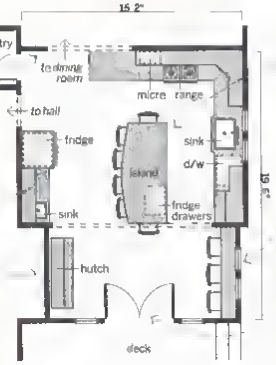
before

The 200-square-foot kitchen lacked space for big family gatherings



after

A 7-foot bumpout claimed deck space and increased the footprint to 304 square feet



1] Widened the cased opening to include a cutout above the counter for a bigger sight line to the dining room and beyond

2] Moved the fridge to a new prep area with its own sink

3] Bumped out the exterior wall 7 feet annexing space from the deck, which was rebuilt.

4] Gave the old 5 foot 3 inch island to a friend in favor of one rotated and enlarged to 7 feet 6 inches with two fridge drawers

5] Added a kid height countertop with three stools under new windows

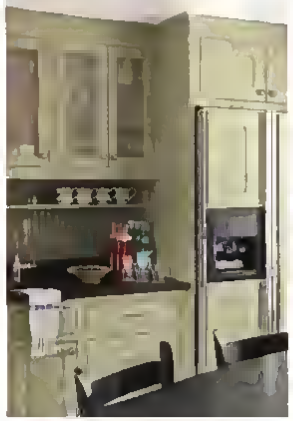
6] Reinstalled the French doors and windows in the new exterior wall which connects to the rebuilt deck

FLOOR PLANS: ANDREW E

The existing range's marble backsplash is flanked by tongue-and-groove beadboard. The microwave sits flush inside a custom niche. *Vent fan: Broan. Microwave: GE*

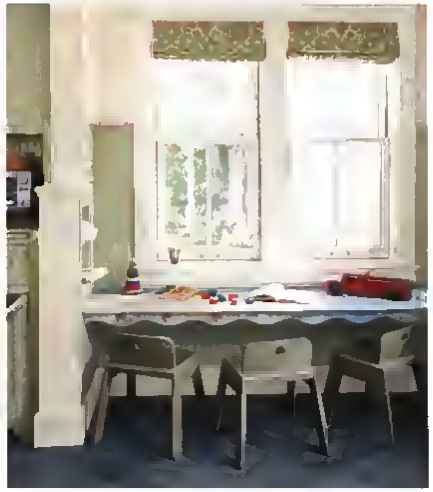
GREAT GREEN KITCHENS To find our 19 favorites scan this page with the Blippar app or go to **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015**

Detailed trim, including an old-fashioned shelf-height adjuster, warms up built-ins framing the sink. *Beadboard backsplash paint: Benjamin Moore's Louisburg Green. Knobs and pulls: Sira Designs*



homeowner tip MARILYN THOMPSON, CHATHAM, MASS.

"To unify the space, I chose several shades of green, using the palest on the cabinets and the darkest to ground the floor pattern, coordinating it with the kids' stools."



New cabinets and green-tinged granite with a smudge-proof "feathered" finish blend seamlessly with the existing kitchen. Glass fronts allow light to travel and also reinforce the period look. *Refrigerator: KitchenAid*

Marilyn created the lattice floor pattern as well as the shell detail on the kids' snack bar. *Paint: Benjamin Moore's Georgian Green (wainscot) and Louisburg Green (stools)*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 101

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Brighter and sleeker

A smart rejiggering and reflective finishes bring better flow and more light to a once cramped space

BY MICHELLE BRUNNER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRIDLEY + GRAVES

OLD HOUSES aren't generally known for their roomy bathrooms. Take this second-floor hall bath in Brett Youmans and Rich Ault's 1870 Italianate, in Reading, Pennsylvania. With a boxy linen closet, a tub, and a toilet along one wall and a sink on the one opposite, the space felt cramped. Add in dated finishes, and it was screaming for an overhaul.

The couple's goal: a space that felt bright and serene. So they formulated a plan that arrayed all the fixtures along one wall. The tub would come out, a glass shower enclosure would go where the closet stood, and a leggy console sink would move to where the tub had been. To accentuate the 10-foot ceiling, they ran oversize white subway tile 8½ feet high on all the walls, except behind the sink, where they had bumped forward to hide plumbing. There, watery glass tile adds a spa-like touch, introducing subtle color and helping bounce light around the room. Sleek nickel fixtures and fittings keep the space feeling classic. Says Brett, "We wanted a spacious, light-filled retreat—and we got it."

BEFORE

BEFORE Despite a large window and 10-foot ceilings, the ample tub, the linen closet, and outdated finishes made the space feel dark. **AFTER** Covering the sink wall in watery glass subway tile gives it sophisticated polish; the frameless glass shower enclosure makes the room feel more spacious. *Glass tile: The Tile Shop. Shower enclosure: B&G Glass.*

• **before + after: bath**

The console sink and train style towel rack help preserve an open, airy feeling. *Sink faucet and towel rack: Restoration Hardware*

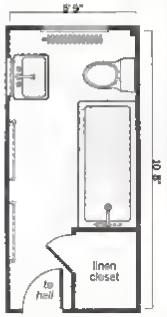
A streamlined satin-nickel medicine cabinet and sconces, along with the glass tile, help reflect light from the room's one window. *Medicine cabinet and sconces: Restoration Hardware*

LEARN TO SET SUBWAY TILE To watch a video, scan this page with the Blippar app or go to thisoldhouse.com/jenfeb2015

The basketweave marble floor tile has a traditional look and picks up the color of the glass subways. Thermostatically controlled radient heat is another luxurious touch. *Floor tile: The Tile Shop. Floor heat: SunTouch System*

before

The 6-foot tub and the linen closet made for a congested layout.



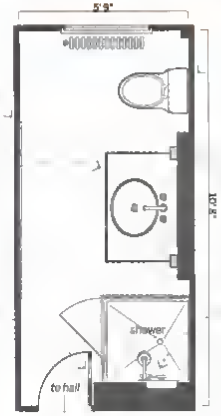
after

Removing the tub and closet allowed for more open space

1] Inset a 2-by-6-foot mirror into the wall tile to reflect light from the window

2] Removed the tub and replaced it with a sink to create an aisle on one side of the room

3] Brought in more light by cutting out the upper portion of the door and installing privacy glass



4] Kept the toilet in the same location to minimize plumbing hassles

5] Bumped in the sink wall 7½ inches to run pipes and recess a medicine cabinet.

6] Gutted the linen closet to make room for a 35-by-38-inch frameless glass shower enclosure

7 - RIS BLEY + GRAVES FLOOR PLANS - ANI WISPINALE

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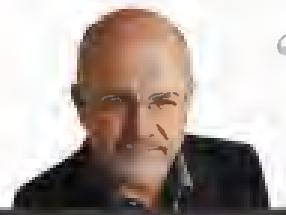

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FOUR QUESTIONS FOR

Norm Abram

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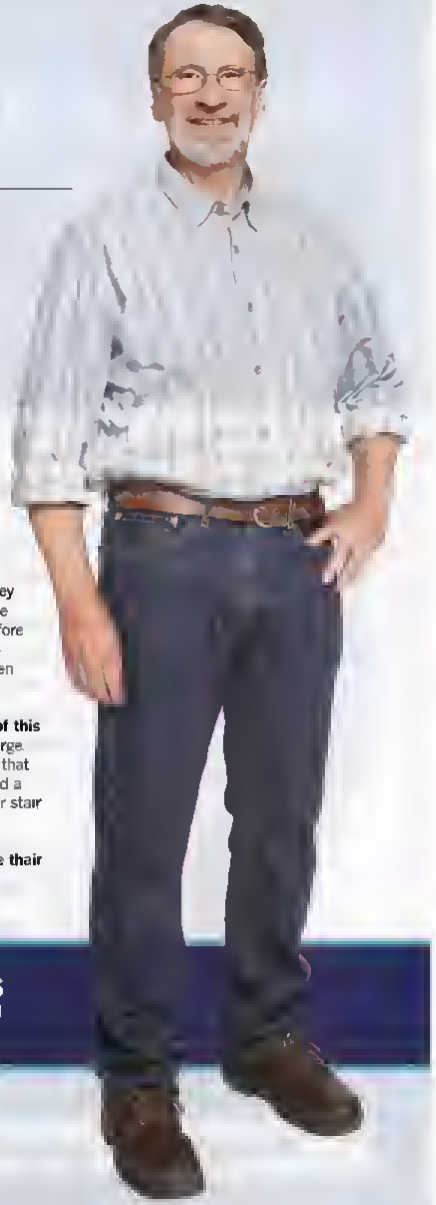
You've been with the show for all of its 35 years. How has residential building changed in that time? I think it's changed for the better. The development of new, innovative building materials and energy efficient heating and cooling systems and appliances gives us the opportunity to renovate and build homes that are stronger, smarter, and cleaner to run.

Are there any trends in home-building today that you're particularly excited about? Maybe it's just my age, but I'm very excited about the whole concept of universal design. Having dealt with aging parents, the idea of downsizing our personal life has been on my mind recently. The Essex project we did recently (TOH TV, Season 33) came at just the right time, and it's influencing our decisions in a very positive way.

What's the biggest mistake first-time remodelers make? And how can they avoid it? Thinking only in terms of how they want the project to look in the end. They should first ensure that the house is solid and weather tight before improving the living spaces to avoid much bigger—and more expensive—problems down the road. It doesn't do any good to have a beautiful kitchen in a house that has structural or mechanical problems.

The Lexington Project is airing now. What was the most enjoyable part of this project for you? It was really fun to work with the crew to build the first large gable wall for the addition above the garage. It is always satisfying to see that first new wall go up, particularly when it is big and complicated. I also had a great time with Kevin, installing the mitered treads on the amazing corner stair for the back deck that Tom and Kevin framed.

In 10 words or less, what's your best advice for DIYers who want to hone their woodworking skills? Take your time, and start with small projects.



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Storage ottomans

Double-duty footrests offer a stylish spot to stow your stuff

BY MEGAN BAKER + PHOTOGRAPHS BY LISA SHIN

THE SECRET TO making the most of any living space? Multipurpose pieces with built-in organizing potential. Case in point: the hardworking storage ottoman, which serves as a spare seat, a footrest after a long day, and a coffee table (especially with the addition of a tray), all while providing a place to stash overflow within easy reach. To keep it from becoming the upholstered equivalent of a junk drawer, devote your ottoman to a single type of item, such as extra throws, electronic devices, or spare shoes.

Here and on the following pages are 10 of our favorite functional finds—so good-looking, you'd never dream they had a hidden use.

cinched
KINFINE
Covered in: Textured polyester
Size: 16½"W x 16½"D x 17"H
Highlights: An hourglass shape and a small allover pattern offer up a modern, sculptural look. $63, wayfair.com

roundabout
FRONTGATE
Covered in: Polyester microfiber
Size: 31"W x 20"H
Highlights: Brass casters make it mobile, while the tufted top and curved wood feet give it a luxurious feel. $299; frontgate.com

natural touch
GRANDIN ROAD
Covered in: Sea grass and rattan
Size: 24"W × 18"D × 18"H
Highlights: Woven sea grass gives this hinged-lid ottoman earthy texture. The large, flat top makes it a workable coffee table, too. $169; grandinroad.com

stowaway
SAUDER
Covered in: Polyester linen
Size: 14¾"W × 14¾"D × 15"H
Highlights: Sturdy enough to prop up your feet, this model collapses and folds flat when you're looking to free up extra floor space. $30; sauder.com

fit and trim
SAFAVIEH
Covered in: Natural linen
Size: 24"W × 18"H
Highlights: Contrast piping and wood feet make the most of the round shape, while the tufted top provides a softly tailored look. $249; grandinroad.com

table service
CRATE AND BARREL
Covered in: Leather
Size: 17½"W × 17½"D × 17¼"H
Highlights: A cushioned leather top flips over and recesses to reveal a sleek tray that's fit for entertaining—and bright-orange leather sets a festive mood. $149; crateandbarrel.com

nailed it
ELEGANT HOME FASHIONS
Covered in: Vinyl
Size: 18"W × 18"D × 19"H
Highlights: Polished-nickel nailhead trim and a tapered shape add an unexpected kick to this faux-leather number. $140; wayfair.com

basket case
ASHLAND
Covered in: Rattan
Size: 16¼"W × 16½"D × 17½"H
Highlights: Woven natural fibers cover a curvy silhouette that's surprisingly roomy inside. $50; michaels.com

well tailored
THRESHOLD
Covered in: Polyester
Size: 17¾"W × 24"D × 17¼"H
Highlights: Turned feet pair up with pale-gray fabric and silvery nailheads for a style that fits both traditional and more-modern decor. Soft-close hinges protect rummaging hands. $90; target.com

shoe-in
HOME DECORATORS COLLECTION
Covered in: Printed cotton canvas (body) and vinyl (top)
Size: 24"W × 19"H
Highlights: A removable divider inside can store 10 pairs of shoes. $209; homedecorators.com

About half of men over 40 have some degree of erectile dysfunction (ED). VIAGRA (sildenafil citrate) helps guys with ED get and keep an erection. And you only take it when you need it. VIAGRA usually starts working in 30-60 minutes.

Individual results may vary.

Ask your doctor if VIAGRA is right for you.

VIAGRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction. VIAGRA is not for women or children.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION BELOW

Do not take VIAGRA if you:
- Take any other medicines called nitrates, often prescribed for chest pain, as this may cause a sudden, unsafe drop in blood pressure
- Are allergic to sildenafil, as contained in VIAGRA and REVATIO, or any of the ingredients in VIAGRA.

Discuss your health with your doctor to ensure that you are healthy enough for sex. If you experience chest pain, dizziness, or nausea during sex, seek immediate medical help.

VIAGRA can cause serious side effects. Rarely reported side effects include:
- an erection that will not go away (priapism). If you have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours, get medical help right away. If it is not treated right away, priapism can permanently damage your penis.
- sudden vision loss in one or both eyes. Sudden vision loss in one or both eyes can be a sign of a serious eye problem called non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION). Stop taking VIAGRA and call your healthcare provider right away if you have any sudden vision loss.
- sudden hearing decrease or hearing loss. Some people may also have ringing in their ears (tinnitus) or dizziness. If you have these symptoms, stop taking VIAGRA and contact a doctor right away.

Before you take VIAGRA, tell your healthcare provider if you:
- have or have had heart problems such as a heart attack, irregular heartbeat, angina, chest pain, narrowing of the aortic valve, or heart failure
- have had heart surgery within the last 6 months
- have had a stroke
- have low blood pressure, or high blood pressure that is not controlled
- have a deformed penis shape
- have had an erection that lasted for more than 4 hours
- have problems with your blood cells such as sickle cell anemia, multiple myeloma, or leukemia
- have retinitis pigmentosa, a rare genetic (runs in families) eye disease
- have ever had severe vision loss, including an eye problem called NAION
- have bleeding problems
- have or have had stomach ulcers
- have liver problems
- have kidney problems or are having kidney dialysis
- have any other medical conditions

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

VIAGRA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect the way VIAGRA works, causing side effects. Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following:
- medicines called nitrates
- medicines called alpha-blockers such as Hytrin (terazosin HCl), Flomax (tamsulosin HCl), Cardura (doxazosin mesylate), Minipress (prazosin HCl), Uroxatrol (alfuzosin HCl), Jalyn (dutasteride and tamsulosin HCl), or Rapaflo (silodosin). Alpha-blockers are sometimes prescribed for prostate problems or high blood pressure. In some patients, the use of VIAGRA with alpha-blockers can lead to a drop in blood pressure or to fainting.
- medicines called HIV protease inhibitors, such as ritonavir (Norvir), indinavir sulfate (Crixivan), saquinavir (Fortovase or Invirase), or atazanavir sulfate (Reyataz)
- some types of oral antifungal medicines, such as ketoconazole (Nizoral) and itraconazole (Sporanox)
- some types of antibiotics, such as clarithromycin (Biaxin), telithromycin (Ketek), or erythromycin
- other medicines that treat high blood pressure
- other medicines or treatments for ED
- VIAGRA contains sildenafil, which is the same medicine found in another drug called REVATIO. REVATIO is used to treat a rare disease called pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH). VIAGRA should not be used with REVATIO or with other PAH treatments containing sildenafil or any other PDE5 inhibitors (such as Adcirca [tadalafil]).

VIAGRA does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

The most common side effects of VIAGRA: headache, flushing, upset stomach, abnormal vision, such as changes in color vision (such as having a blue color tinge) and blurred vision; stuffy or runny nose; back pain; muscle pain; nausea; dizziness; rash.

Please see Important Facts for VIAGRA on the following page or visit viagra.com for full prescribing information for VIAGRA (25 mg, 50 mg, 100 mg) tablets.

*Data taken from the Massachusetts Male Aging Study. Of 1,290 respondents, 52% stated they had some degree of ED.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA.
Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

For more information go to viagra.com or call 1-888-454-2472 (1-888-4VIAGRA).

VIAGRA® (sildenafil citrate) tablets

IMPORTANT FACTS

VIAGRA (sildenafil citrate) tablets (vi-AG-rah)

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT VIAGRA

VIAGRA can cause your blood pressure to drop suddenly to an unsafe level if it is taken with certain other medicines. Do not take VIAGRA if you take medicines called "nitrates" for chest pain (angina). A sudden drop in blood pressure can cause you to feel dizzy, faint, or have a heart attack or stroke.

Tell all your healthcare providers that you take VIAGRA.
If you need emergency medical care for a heart problem, tell your healthcare provider when you last took VIAGRA.

Stop sexual activity and get medical help right away if you have chest pain, dizziness, or nausea during sex.

Ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex, especially if you: heart is already weak from a heart attack or heart disease.

VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from getting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV—the virus that causes AIDS.

WHAT IS VIAGRA?

VIAGRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction (ED). VIAGRA helps a man with erectile dysfunction get and keep an erection only when he is sexually excited (stimulated).

VIAGRA is not for use in women or children under 18 years of age.

DO NOT TAKE VIAGRA IF YOU:

- Take medicines called "nitrates" (such as nitroglycerin)
- Use street drugs called "poppers" (such as amyl nitrate or nitrite and butyl nitrate)
- Are allergic to sildenafil, as contained in VIAGRA and Revatio, or any of the ingredients in VIAGRA

BEFORE YOU START VIAGRA

Tell your doctor if you have or ever had:

- Heart attack, abnormal heartbeats, or stroke
- Heart problems, such as heart failure, chest pain, angina, or aortic valve narrowing
- Heart surgery within the last 6 months
- Low or high blood pressure
- Severe vision loss, including an eye problem called non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION)
- An eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa
- Kidney or liver problems
- Blood problems, such as sickle cell anemia, multiple myeloma, or leukemia
- A deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- Stomach ulcers or any kind of bleeding problems
- Any other medical conditions

Tell your doctor about all your medicines,
including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

VIAGRA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect the way VIAGRA works, causing side effects. Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following:

- Medicines called nitrates (see **"IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT VIAGRA"**)
- Medicines called alpha blockers such as Hytrin (terazosin HCl), Flomax (tamsulosin HCl), Cardura (doxazosin mesylate), Minipress (prazosin HCl), Uroxatral (alfuzosin HCl), Jalyn (dutasteride and tamsulosin HCl), or Rapaflo (silodosin). Alpha blockers are sometimes prescribed for prostate problems or high blood pressure. In some patients the use of VIAGRA with alpha blockers can lead to a drop in blood pressure or to fainting.
- Medicines called HIV protease inhibitors, such as ritonavir (Norvir), indinavir sulfate (Crixivan), saquinavir (Fortovase or Invirase), or atazanavir sulfate (Reyataz)
- Some types of oral antifungal medicines, such as ketoconazole (Nizoral) and itraconazole (Sporanox)
- Some types of antibiotics, such as clarithromycin (Biaxin), telithromycin (Ketek), or erythromycin
- Other medicines that treat high blood pressure
- Other medicines or treatments for ED
- VIAGRA contains sildenafil, which is also found in another drug called REVATIO. REVATIO is used to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH). VIAGRA should not be used with REVATIO or with other PAH treatments containing sildenafil or any other PDE5 inhibitors (such as Adcirca [tadalafil]).

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIAGRA

What are the possible side effects of VIAGRA?

VIAGRA can cause serious side effects. Rarely reported side effects include:

- **An erection that will not go away (priapism).** If you have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours, get medical help right away. If it is not treated right away, priapism can permanently damage your penis.
- **Sudden vision loss in one or both eyes.** Sudden vision loss in one or both eyes can be a sign of a serious eye problem called non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION). Stop taking VIAGRA and call your healthcare provider right away if you have sudden vision loss in one or both eyes.
- **Sudden hearing decrease or hearing loss.** Some people may also have ringing in their ears (tinnitus) or dizziness. If you have these symptoms, stop taking VIAGRA and contact a doctor right away.

The most common side effects of VIAGRA are:

- Headache
- Flushing
- Upset stomach
- Abnormal vision, such as changes in color vision (such as having a blue color tinge) and blurred vision
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Back pain
- Muscle pain
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Rash

In addition, heart attack, stroke, irregular heartbeats, and death have happened rarely in men taking VIAGRA. Most, but not all, of these men had heart problems before taking VIAGRA. It is not known if VIAGRA caused these problems.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of VIAGRA. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

HOW TO TAKE VIAGRA

- Take VIAGRA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it.
- Your healthcare provider will tell you how much and when to take Viagra.
- Your healthcare provider may change your dose if needed.
- Take VIAGRA about 1 hour before sexual activity. You may take VIAGRA between 30 minutes to 4 hours before sexual activity if needed.
- VIAGRA can be taken with or without food. If you take VIAGRA after a high fat meal (such as a cheeseburger and french fries), VIAGRA may take a little longer to start working.
- Do not take VIAGRA more than 1 time a day.
- If you accidentally take too much VIAGRA, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

This is only a summary of important information. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for complete product information OR

Go to **www.viagra.com** or call **(888) 4-VIAGRA (484-2472)**

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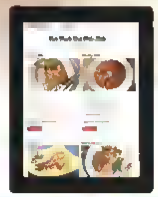

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Color-washed plank wall

Use latex paint and glaze to bring out a wood's grain and add translucent layers of color

BY DEBORAH BALDWIN • PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID PRINCE

PAINT IS NORMALLY used to hide wood grain, especially the noticeable streaks in poplar. The planked wall here breaks with tradition by showcasing that wood's unique characteristics; other types of wood would yield very different results.

Mark Chamberlain, a decorative painter in New York City, says that at one time he would have reached for oil-based paint and mineral spirits to get a coating thin enough to let the wood grain show through. But these days you can get similar results with low- to no-VOC latex paint and glaze. "Glaze provides a translucent look with a subtle sheen," Chamberlain says, "and latex means easy cleanup."

For the most nuanced look, he suggests layering two slightly different shades and formulations. First, "prime" the planks with a wet towel to slow drying time and prevent visible brush marks. Then brush on equal parts of the paler color mixed with water, and let dry. Next, mix 3 parts of the darker shade with 2 parts glaze and brush it on. Aim to work steadily so that wet brushstrokes meet wet brushstrokes, Chamberlain says. "And experiment with a sample board first so you get just the right color and translucency for your space." ■

For a similar look try:

COLORHOUSE
Aspire 05

COLORHOUSE
Aspire 04

Laid-back living room

Vintage-style furnishings, warm neutrals, and natural textures create a handsome, easygoing gathering space

BY KATHRYN O SHEA EVANS

HERE'S A straightforward strategy for giving a room cohesive style without making it look too vanilla. Restrict the furnishings' color palette to tans, taupes, and other pale, earthy hues. Take this sitting room, where throwback pieces—a tufted Chesterfield sofa here, a dial-up-style phone there—mingle with warm yet light wood tones for a traditional but informal look. Repurposed items, such as the salvaged footlocker coffee table and an old bartender's stool turned end table, have an unstuffy feel that puts company at ease, as do quirky, more modern surprises, like the dachshund-print upholstery fabric. Set against soothing sage-green walls, it all adds up to a living room meant for lounging. To assemble a similar space, read on.

distressed clock

The worn painted finish on this metal timepiece suggests it has been around awhile, but its battery operated works keep it up to speed. $30, homegoods.com

flared sconce

A pair of these bronze finished fixtures impart industrial cool to a sitting area. Add an Edison bulb to play up its early 20th-century style. $129, potterybarn.com

vintage-look art

New York City locales become boldface names on the giclee printed poster below, which is patterned after old subway signs. Print $50, art.com. Frame $42, wayfair.com

chunky wood lamp

With its rectangular body, this wood-grain–finished resin version echoes the find at right at a fraction of the price. Lamp, $40, and linen drum lampshade, $30, lampsplus.com

retro phone

This touch-tone number resembles a 1930s rotary dial–up model—and has authentic heft. $65, vermontcountrystore.com

stool table

This three-legged iron and recycled wood piece spins to your desired height, making for an excellent end table. $179, totallyfurniture.com

Chesterfield loveseat

Rolled arms, nailhead trim, and tufting give a scaled-down version of the classic sofa (here in recycled leather) a timeless feel. $849, homedecorators.com

footlocker table

Set out a vintage trunk with a flat top as your coffee table and stash extra magazines, throws, or kids' toys inside. We found this circa 1947 steel and wood military footlocker for $150 on chairish.com

dachshund pillows

Silk screened on canvas, these double-sided cushions strike the same doggone fun note as the print on the wingback at left. $50 each, wayfair.com

Small steps to big savings

Make bank with these nifty, thrifty around-the-house tips

BY JEANNE HUBER • ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

WHO SAYS NOBODY likes to talk about money? Here at *This Old House*, we live to swap tips that'll save you cash. On home repairs that you can head off with a little preventive maintenance—or tackle yourself. On rising energy costs that have you layering on sweaters so that you can turn down the heat. On store purchases you need to make to keep the home fires burning. Do we love to pinch a penny? You bet. Hey, every little bit helps, as these tips attest.

2

POWER DOWN UTILITY COSTS

1 Stop drafts around drapes. You can save up to 10 percent on your heating bill just by closing the curtains at night. Up that number by nipping drafts around the edges. Install a cornice or hang drapery panels at the ceiling, letting them fall to the windowsill or floor. Seal outer edges to the wall and inside edges to each other with Velcro tape ($8 for a 5-foot roll, amazon.com). Or add insulated liners and treat them the same way (from $35 per pair; sears.com).
THE PAYOFF: Closing the drapes saves **$125 a year;** blocking drafts can boost savings for the average home to 25 percent, or **$298**.

2 Put a shine on lightbulbs. Dirty bulbs emit 30 percent less light than clean ones, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). If the room is dimmer, you might get the urge to turn on more fixtures instead. Dust bulbs in lamps and other open fixtures regularly with a clean, dry cloth. Just be sure to switch off the lights and let the bulbs cool thoroughly first, as heated bulbs can shatter.
THE PAYOFF: Every additional LED lightbulb you *don't* turn on for, say, 5 hours a day, saves about $3 a year. Don't switch on seven extra light sources for that amount of time and save **about $21 a year.**

3 Make a fridge more efficient. A fridge that runs too cold costs you money. A 5°F change could save 10 percent on electricity worth about $15 a year. Put a thermometer inside overnight and adjust settings as needed to between 35°F and 38°F (the sweet spot for food safety). To prevent condensation, some fridges have a heater, which eats up 5 to 10 percent of the electricity they use. Look for an energy saver, power saver, or humidity control switch. If you find one, turn it off, unless (or until) you see water beads on the door seals or exterior.
THE PAYOFF: Do both, and you'll save **about $30 a year.**

4 Turn off lights. Sure, a 60-watt equivalent LED lightbulb uses only $1.14 worth of electricity a year, according to the label. But that number is based on the bulb being on for just 3 hours a day at a rate of 11 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). In high utility cost areas, such as New England, where prices can be 17 cents per kWh, that same bulb costs $1.77 for 3 hours. Leave a light on for 15 hours a day at that rate, and the yearly tab zooms to $8.84 per bulb. If you leave on just 10 of the average home's 85 lights for 15 hours a day, you're talking $88.40 per year.
THE PAYOFF: Turn off each of those 10 bulbs after 3 hours and, if you pay 17 cents per kWh, save about **$70 a year.**

5 Add storms—inside. Give original single-pane windows dual-pane efficiency while preserving their vintage look. Custom-fit acrylic panes from Indow (indowwindows.com) simply press into place; silicone tubing around the edges creates an airtight seal.
THE PAYOFF: A study by the DOE found that installing interior inserts led to an average 20 percent reduction in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning for a typical savings of **$166 a year.**

5

6 Boost fireplace efficiency. Many dampers don't close tightly when the fire's out. A reusable inflatable plug, such as the Chimney Pillow Fireplace Draftstopper ($55–$110; battledoor.com), seals when you need it to and deflates when you don't.
THE PAYOFF: A plug can cut the average home's annual heating cost of $593 by up to 30 percent, or **about $177 a year.**

7 Replace an old ceiling fan. Running ceiling fans clockwise in winter pushes heated air down, allowing you to turn down the thermostat by up to 5°F without feeling it. You can save 10 percent on heating bills, or $59 a year, that way. Save even more by replacing a decade-old fixture.
THE PAYOFF: Bump up savings by an additional $15 a year with an Energy Star–rated fan for a total savings of about **$75 a year.** These fixtures are 60 percent more efficient than older models.

8 Fill a bathtub gap. Got a tub over a crawl space or an unheated basement? Odds are the plumber cut an outsized drain hole in the subfloor and left it open to the space below. Patch the hole with scrap plywood cut to fit around the pipes. For added insulation and fire protection, fill in any gaps with a fire-blocking foam, such as Dow's Great Stuff Fireblock Insulating Foam Sealant ($5 for a 12-ounce can; lowes.com).
THE PAYOFF: You'll save the same amount of energy you'd lose by leaving a window cracked open all day, every day, plus the **$100 to $150** a plumber would charge to seal the hole.

9 Give computers a rest. Use the SLEEP mode so that the monitor dims after 10 minutes of idle time. You'll save electricity while extending the life of your computer.
THE PAYOFF: Using this feature

will save you up to **$90 a year** in electricity. It'll also help reduce greenhouse gases.

10 Nab food fast. Get in and get out. That's the trick to cutting refrigerator energy costs. Opening the door for just a few seconds doesn't hurt much, but beyond 30 seconds, the energy losses add up as warm, moist air flows in and makes the compressor work harder. Reduce the number of times you open your fridge—the average is 33 times a day!
THE PAYOFF: Keep the door closed enough so that the fridge uses 10 percent less electricity and you'll save **$15 a year.**

11 Add an irrigation meter. You probably pay sewer fees based on the amount of water you use, even if half of it winds up on the lawn instead of in a wastewater treatment plant. Ask your utility to install a separate meter for landscaping water (you'll bear the cost), and you'll pay sewer fees only for water used indoors.

THE PAYOFF: The cost-benefit analysis will differ by community, but in Atlanta, avoiding sewer fees on half your water bill saves about **$70 a month.**

12 Change the showerhead. Old showerheads spew out as much as 5½ gallons per minute (gpm), twice the federal limit and more than three times what a newer showerhead like the 1.5-gallon, ultra low-flow Niagara Earth Massage ($19, overstock.com) delivers.
THE PAYOFF: You could save **$112 a year** in hot-water costs.

13 Upgrade faucet aerators. These reduce splashing by forcing water through a screen, which adds air and breaks the flow into rivulets. They also control the flow rate, so spending as little as 68 cents on a 1-gpm low-flow aerator buys you water and energy savings.
THE PAYOFF: Pocket **$100 a year** if you have a gas water heater. **$141** if it's electric.

14 Come spring, plant trees. Shade from even five-year-old deciduous trees planted on the east, west, and northwest sides of your house can help save up to 35 percent on yearly energy costs. In a hot spot like Sacramento, California, one mature tree could reduce the AC bill by as much as 40 percent.
THE PAYOFF: Savings will vary depending on where you live, but in Sacramento one mature tree can trim cooling costs by **$440 a year.**

HEAD OFF BUDGET-BUSTING REPAIRS

15 Add years to an exterior paint job. Got a few chipped, flaking, or peeling spots? Areas where the paint is bubbled or faded? Remove loose paint with a scraper, and cover the area with primer and fresh paint. Repairs will look shinier at first but blend in as they weather.
THE PAYOFF: An exterior paint job averages $3,108, or $444 a year if the job lasts seven years. Stretch it to 10 and you save **$1,332.**

16 Protect pipes with a hair strainer. Placing this inexpensive plastic cover on your shower drain can help fend off clogs and the hassles that go with them.
THE PAYOFF: You save the **$226** a plumber charges for a typical house call.

17 Test your sump pump's backup. To check the battery, unplug the main pump and fill the pit with water. If the pump doesn't switch on, replace the battery. Also, be sure the main pump works when it's plugged back in.
THE PAYOFF: The $140 you spend for a new battery is a steal compared with **$500** to pump out a flooded basement or **$10,000 or more** to replace floors and walls.

18 Deep-clean your dryer. Dryer lint is a leading cause of 3,000 residential dryer fires and $35 million in property damage each year. But such fires are easy to avoid. First, remove lint from the screen after each use. Twice a year, grab a bendable dryer vent brush ($10, containerstore.com), run it down the inside of the lint trap, and then vacuum up any remaining lint and dirt. Finally, detach and vacuum out the dryer duct.
THE PAYOFF: An inexpensive brush could save you **$9,610,** the average cost of damage from a dryer fire.

19 Swap in "no burst" stainless-steel washer hoses. Replacing old rubber hoses can prevent a 500-gallon-per-hour tsunami if a hose ruptures. Buy ones long enough to allow for some slack, and right-angle connectors if needed. Check hoses for cracks and leaks every six months or replace as needed.
THE PAYOFF: Your modest investment (72-inch hose, about $20, acehardware.com) can save upwards of **$15,000** to pump out and redo a flooded basement.

20 Put in smart sensors. Low-temperature and leak sensors send your smartphone an alert before pipes freeze and small leaks become major issues. Those from Wally ($229 each, wallyhome.com) use existing wiring to gather data and send it back to an Internet-connected base station. Sensors should last 10 years without a battery change.
THE PAYOFF: A 1-inch flood in a 2,000-square-foot home could cost you **$20,920** in damage and property losses.

21 Coax a balky vacuum cleaner back to life. Before ditching that $300 model, try fixing it yourself. It might be as simple as clearing obstructions in the hose or removing fibers wound around the beater bar. If it isn't, check the manual for tips on replacing a fuse ($3), a broken belt ($3.50), a brush roll ($20), or a filter ($5–$20). Lost the manual? Find it at homeappliancemanualsonline.com.
THE PAYOFF: Save yourself the cost of repair, **$75 and up.**

22 Track any cracks on basement walls. Small fissures that have been there for years aren't a worry, but ones that are growing are cause for concern. Keep an eye on them by placing masking tape across a crack, slicing through the tape right over it with a razor blade. If the split in the tape widens, call a structural engineer.
THE PAYOFF: You might pay from $500 to $1,500 for a thorough evaluation. But the fix could be as simple as rerouting gutter water away from the house. Beats a major foundation repair, which would cost **from $10,000 to $14,000.**

23 Give the front-loader a little TLC. The rubber door gasket on these washing machines can be a magnet for slime—and mold—since water can collect in its folds. Clean by wiping down the gasket and door glass with a microfiber cloth after each use, and the detergent dispenser twice a month. Leaving the washer door ajar between loads can help head off the problem.
THE PAYOFF: Prolong the life of the gasket and save **$100** for a DIY replacement or about **$300** for a parts-and-service call from a pro.

BECOME SAVVIER ABOUT SHOPPING

24 Dial back on furnace filters. Superefficient filters trap more dust, pollen, and animal dander but they don't necessarily result in cleaner air. That's because these relatively large particles tend to settle before they even get to the filter. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends medium-efficiency filters with a MERV rating between 7 and 13.
THE PAYOFF: Spend $7 for a filter with a MERV rating of 7 and save **$780 over five years,** if you change it monthly.

25 Skip extended warranties. Add-on warranties are a financial bonanza for stores but rarely make sense for you. Studies show that the average cost of repairs covered by warranties is only slightly higher than the cost of coverage.
THE PAYOFF: Say "no thanks" and save **$37** with small appliances, **$65 to $75** with electronics, and **$118** with major appliances.

26 Use your smartphone to compare prices. Mobile apps such as RedLaser or ShopSavvy read bar codes on items in stores and let you know if the products are available elsewhere for less. Find a better deal? Ask for a price match.
THE PAYOFF: Savings will vary, but the RedLaser app recently helped one shopper use The Home Depot's price-match policy to slash **$220** off the cost of a new washing machine.

27 Take advantage of seasonal sales. Many retailers discount storage products and organizing solutions in January when New Year's resolutions are on your mind. Smart shoppers can also take advantage of sales on furniture and carpeting this month. Websites such as freeshipping.org list what's a-gboo buy month to month.
THE PAYOFF: Purchase the dream closet that normally costs $2,764 at elfa.com now and save a tidy **$830.**

28 Find a Buy Nothing group. It's like Freecycle, but it works via Facebook. Buy Nothing groups let neighbors post things they want, wish to give away, or want to share, for free.
THE PAYOFF: One user saved herself a **$25** disposal fee by simply giving away a no-longer-needed couch.

Spiffing up a 1950s Colonial

A gabled porch and a reworked garage lend a frill-free facade some architectural interest BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS • ILLUSTRATION BY DRAWGATE INC

BEFORE

"I LOVE THAT MY HOUSE backs up to a lake, but I'm at a loss when it comes to the front," says Natalie Ellis of what she calls her "Colonial clunker," in Ocean Township, New Jersey. We asked architect Daniel Condatore and designer Jason Hanrahan for advice on giving it some charm.

"This is a cookie cutter house, circa 1959," Hanrahan says of the bare-bones Garrison Colonial. They would unify the exterior with clapboard siding in a warm barn-red and add a porch with a low gabled roof to give the facade a center point. As for the garage, "Architecturally, one giant garage is never interesting," Hanrahan notes. Their fix: Divide it into two bays and give the roof interest with blind, or false, dormers. Other, less costly changes include adding window grilles for a divided-light look and window boxes for a quick dose of character. "It doesn't look like the same house at all!" Natalie says. "I love the porch—it's on my list now." ■

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Durable siding and earthy-easy care accents have a timeless appeal.

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Natural stone watar tablas were popular on Craftsman houses. This concrate veneer was cast from natural stacked stone. Ply Gem; $6.25 per squara foot

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Placed over each garage bay, the oil-rubbed bronze-finished fixtures reinforce the new symmatry. The Heme Depot; $43 each

hardware
Made of salid forged brass with a traditional thumb latch and a curved handle, this entry set adds polish to the front door. Weslack, $260

siding
Factory finished fiber cement clapboards weather tha alaments well. In Countryland Red, by James Hardia; from $5 per squara foot

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE DIRECTORY PAGE 101

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BY QUALITY CRAFT

These easy-to-install natural slate veneer click tiles have an eco-friendly cork-backing and are pre-sealed with a water-based varnish, so there is no need to seal the tile. EcoSlate eliminates the need for messy, time-consuming grout work and is perfect for many rooms in your home. qualitycraft.com

EcoSlate

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BY RELIABLE

Reliable introduces this eco-friendly cleaning essential, which simultaneously scrubs tile and grout lines, cleans sealed hard floors, and sanitizes carpets. Skip the chemicals and kill common bacteria and germs with the power of steam at 248° F. All you need is water! reliablecorporation.com

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Here's a great alternative to rigid foam, made from basalt rock and iron slag. With more breathability than foam plastics, ROXUL ComfortBoard IS is breathable and water repellent and insulates exterior walls, roofs, foundations, and basements at R-4 per inch—and that won't diminish over time. It's also noncombustible and a near-perfect sound absorber. roxul.com

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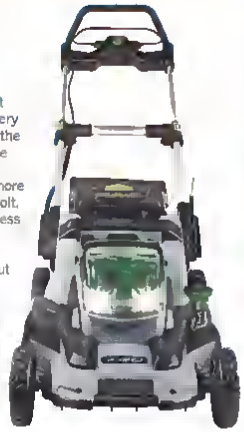

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BY FLIR SYSTEMS INC.

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The World a

DuxxBak Composite Deck Boards

BY GREEN BAY DECKING

This Old House magazine called DuxxBak pure genius because the interlocking edges of our composite deck boards form drainage channels that funnel water to the ends of your deck top The result The formerly unusable space underneath remains dry allowing you to create additional living or storage space

Having one of the only complete non vinyl water-shedding deck systems on the market isn t the only reason DuxxBak s patented system is a step above the competition A combination of paper by product rice hulls HDPE resins and other high quality products gives DuxxBak high fade resistance and minimal water absorption compared with its wood composite competitors

Offered in six naturally beautiful colors DuxxBak is also resistant to mold mildew decay and scratching and is backed by a 25-year limited warranty

Create your dream outdoor living space with DuxxBak and enjoy it in rain or sunshine greenbaydecking com

DuxxBak s Water Shedding Deck System

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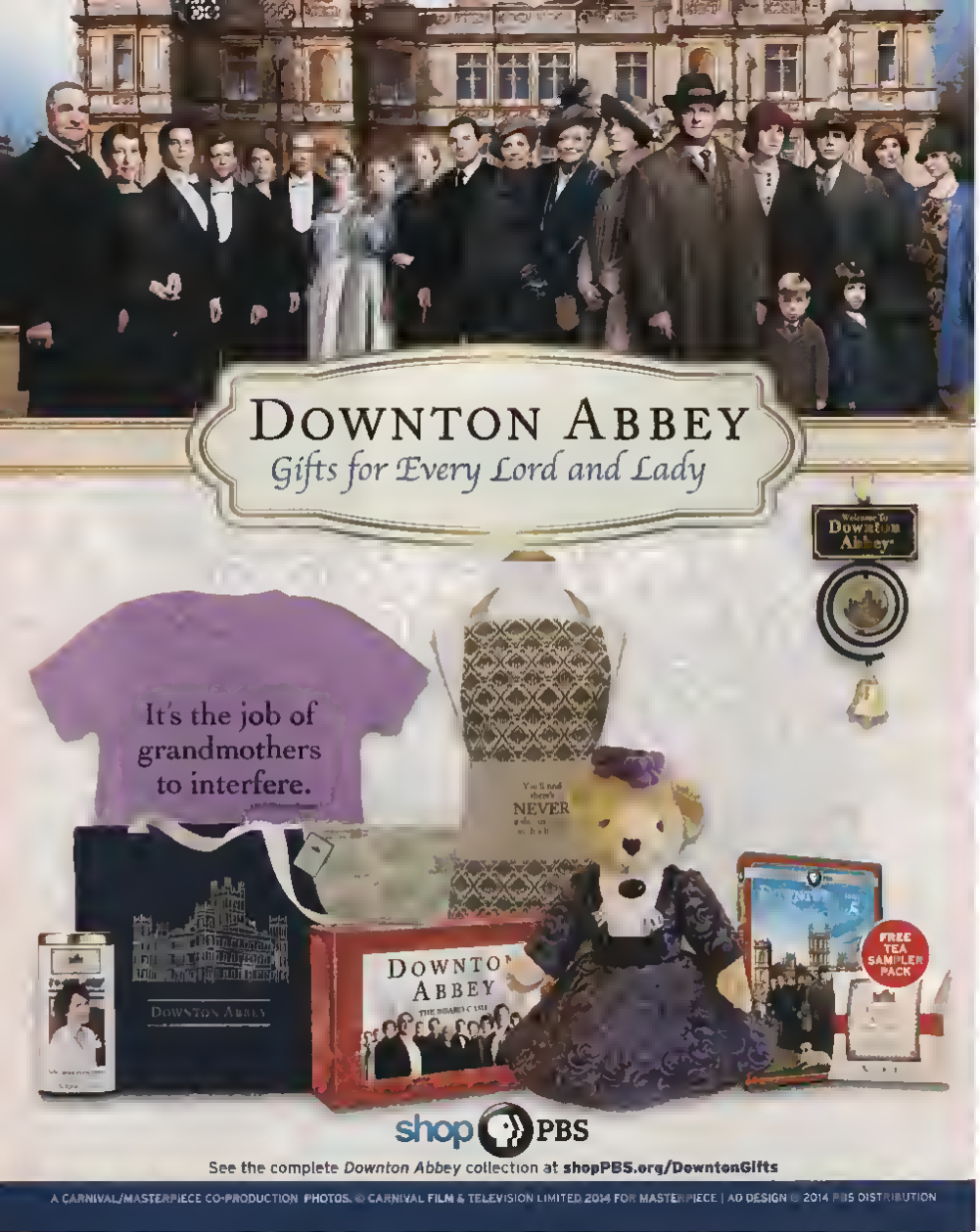
25
A product designed by COSENTINO
DEKTON

DEKTON Surfacing Material

BY COSENTINO

Dekton a revolutionary material composed of glass porcelain and quartz was first introduced in 2013 and has since transformed the world of surfacing with a variety of new application possibilities for both the indoors and outdoors The first new color introductions since launch *Aura Edora Irok Kairos* and *Vegha* now bring the complete Dekton color offering to *15 hues* Each of the new colors encompasses unique design patterns and innovative techniques combined with Dekton s superior performance and low maintenance dekton com

DEKTON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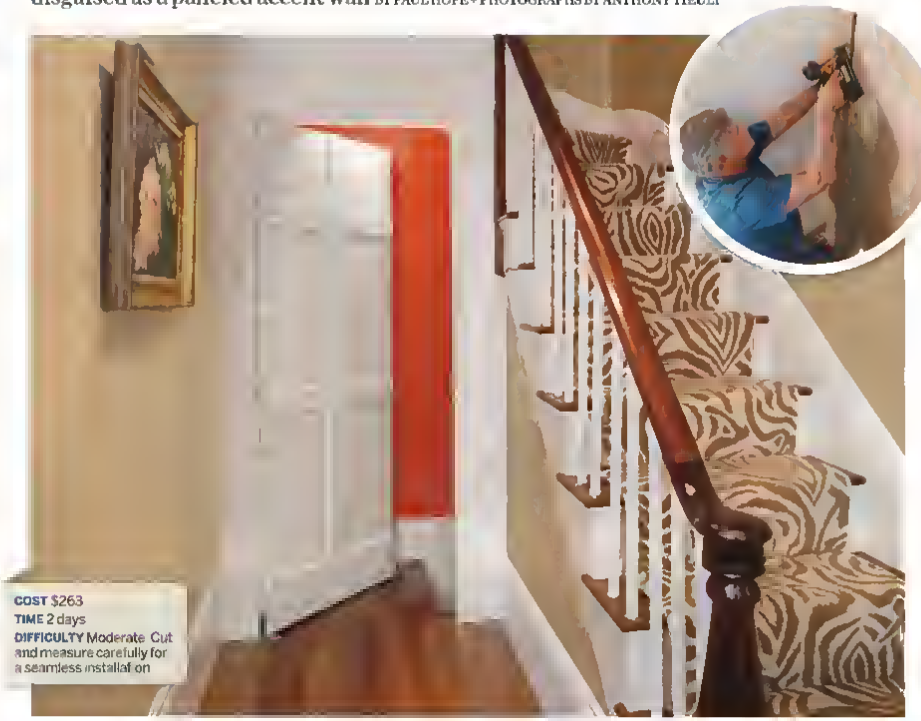
Install a secret swinging door

Trim out a slab door with poplar boards to create a hidden passage disguised as a paneled accent wall BY PAUL HOPE • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY TIEULI



COST $263
TIME 2 days
DIFFICULTY Moderate. Cut and measure carefully for a seamless installation.

PART ACCESS DOOR, PART ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL, this clever embellishment can be used to disguise anything from a powder room to a servant's staircase. So when *This Old House* general contractor Tom Silva set out to conceal the landing to homeowner Angela Daigle's basement on the current season of *TOH* TV, the project seemed a perfect choice for her 1850 brick rowhouse. Tom used butler-door hardware and chamfered notches to make a swinging door that disappears seamlessly into its surroundings when it's closed. Follow along as he walks you through the mechanics—and the magic—of creating your own hidden gem.

Similar to shown: Masonite Smooth Flush Hardwood Solid Core Interior Slab Door $66, homedepot.com. Heavy Duty Swinging Door Hardware $94, houseofantiquehardware.com

DAY-TO-DAY TIMELINE

SATURDAY Hang the door and chamfer the stiles (Steps 1–4)
SUNDAY Finish the paneling (Steps 5–7).

Find a cut list at thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015.

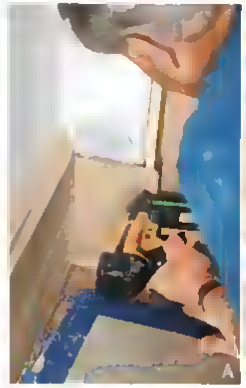
TOOLS	MATERIALS
measuring tape	solid-core interior slab door Get one sized for your existing jamb
drill/driver and bits	
Forstner bit	
jigsaw	½×8 poplar for the side stiles Get two 10' footers
plumb bob	
level	
miter saw	½×6 poplar for the baseboard and top rail Get one 6-footer
air compressor	
pneumatic brad nailer	½×4 poplar for the rails and center stile Get three 8' footers.
hammer	
clamps	butter- or pantry-door hardware kit
router with ¼-inch straight bit and 45° chamfer bit	1-inch wood screws
chisel	1¼-inch 18-gauge brad nails
mallet	wood glue
oscillating multi tool with flush-cutting blade	120-grit sandpaper
compass	caulk
circular saw	primer and paint
wood file	
utility knife	
palm sander	
2½-inch angled sash brush	

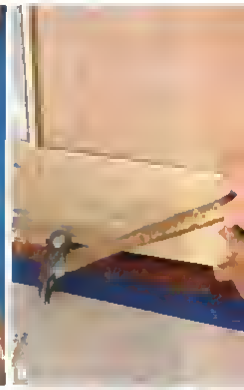
1 HANG THE DOOR

A] **Install the pin hardware.** Remove any door stops to allow the door to swing in both directions. Trace the pin socket on the head jamb, making these adjustments to the hardware instructions: Inset it an extra ½ inch from the side jamb, to keep the door rails from binding, and recess it only half the thickness of your door to bring the face of the door flush with the jamb. Use a Forstner bit to drill overlapping holes, and press the socket in place. Check its location, as shown, and secure it with 1-inch wood screws. Install the pin on the door. The socket placement will move your door over by ½ inch, so you may need to rip it down to get it to fit in the jamb.

B] **Attach the spring.** Trace an outline for the spring hardware on the bottom corner of the door, and use a jigsaw to cut out a notch. Screw the hardware in place. Drop a plumb bob from the pin hole in the socket and mark the floor. Position the door, slipping the pin into the socket and centering the spring hardware on the mark. Prop the door open, use a level to check for plumb, and screw the spring hardware to the floor with 1-inch wood screws.

ILLUSTRATION BY GREGORY NEMEC





2 ADD THE BASEBOARD

A] **Install the corner baseboards.** Measure from the adjacent baseboard to the edge of the door. Cut a piece of baseboard to that length, making a 45° miter cut along the end covering the wide gap between the door and jamb. The miter faces the gap. Apply wood glue to the back of the piece and tack it in place, as shown, with a pneumatic brad gun and 18-gauge brads. Do the same at the opposite side of the door.

B] **Mark for the hardware.** Measure between the two installed pieces of baseboard, and use the miter saw to cut the piece to fit across the bottom of the door, with straight cuts at each end. The spring hardware stands proud of the door, so you'll need to make a recess in the back of the board: to mark it, hold the baseboard in place and tap it with a hammer, creating an impression on the back.

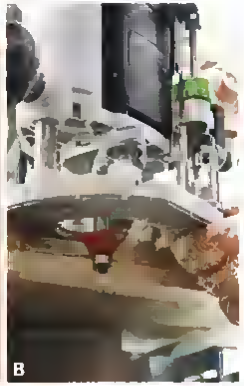
C] **Rout and fasten the baseboard.** Trace the outline for the recess and clamp the baseboard to your work surface, facedown. With a ¼-inch straight bit in your router, set the depth to ¼ inch and rout the outline for the recess, then rout out the waste material inside it. (You can also use a sharp 1-inch chisel and a mallet instead of a router.) Fit the baseboard against your door, making sure it sits flat against the door with its top edge aligned with its neighbors, then glue and tack it in place.

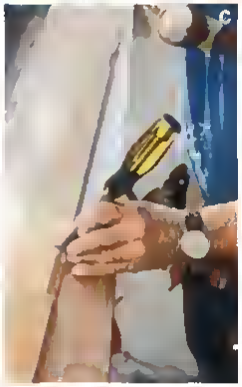
3 CUT THE SIDE STILES

A] **Notch the base cap.** To allow the side stiles to butt against the baseboard, you'll need to notch the base cap molding on the adjacent walls using a sharp chisel or an oscillating multitool fitted with a flush-cutting blade. Hold a ½× scrap against the door wall, and use it as a guide to make the cut, as shown. Now, measure from the top edge of your baseboard to the ceiling, and cut the stiles to length.

B] **Scribe the stiles.** Mark the head jamb where one side stile should cross it—concealing the gap but allowing the door to swing freely. Here, the stile dies into the abutting wall, so it must be scribed to fit. Take a board that's wider than necessary, plumb it against the wall, and make a second mark on the head jamb along its edge. Set the legs of a compass to the space between the two marks. Re-plumb the board, and use the compass to scribe the wall-side edge, as shown. Cut along the line with a jigsaw or circular saw, creating the correct contour and width in one go. Make the opposite side stile the same way.

TIP Set the saw blade at a 5° bevel to undercut the scribed edge, making it easier to sand down any high spots along the cut.





4 CHAMFER THE STILES

A] **Mark for the rails.** Use a level as a straightedge to trace the pattern for paneling onto the door and wall. This design calls for a center stile and four sets of intersecting rails. To allow the ends of the door rails to clear the side stiles, you'll chamfer a 45° notch into the edge of each stile where the rails meet it. Dry-fit a stile alongside the door, hold a scrap of ½×4 in place, and mark the edge of the stile, as shown. Mark the opposite stile the same way.

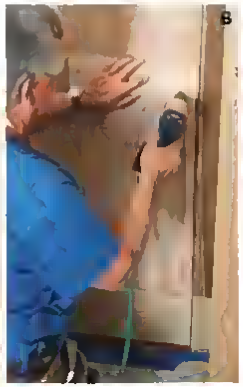
B] **Rout the edge.** Clamp a marked stile to a work surface, facedown with its edge flush with the table's edge. Fit your router with a 45° piloted chamfer bit. Adjust the depth so that the bit stops just shy of cutting through the face of the stile. Rout the chamfered notch between each set of marks. Chamfer the second stile the same way.

C] **Clean the cut.** Use a 1-inch wood chisel to clean up the notches, removing the material in the corners that the router bit can't reach, as shown. Use a wood file to finish the notches.

5 START THE TRIM

A] **Attach the side stiles.** Run a bead of wood glue along the edge of the left-hand doorjamb and on the back of the stile. Press the stile into place, concealing the gap at the jamb, and tack it down, as shown. Install the opposite stile. Next, hold the center stile board alongside a side stile and measure the span between it and the opposite stile. Divide by 2 to get the length for each rail, then cut them to size on a miter saw.

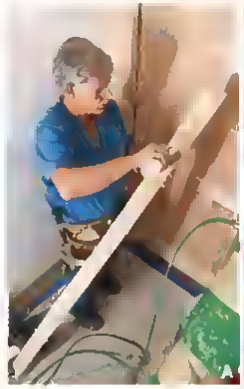
B] **Add the rails.** Cut two furring strips to fit between the baseboard and the line for the lower rail, and use them to prop up the rails on the door as you work. Glue the back of the right rail, rest it on the strips, and tack it to the door, as shown. Use the spacers again to install the door's top right rail.

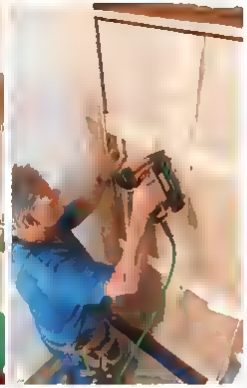


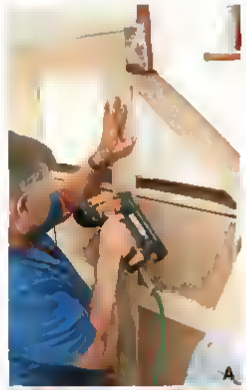
6 TRIM OUT THE DOOR

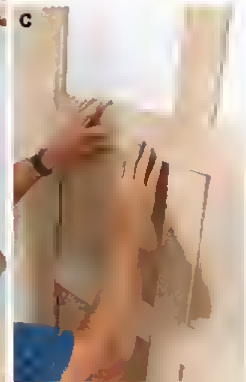
A] **Add the center stile.** Measure and cut the ½×4 center stile to fit between the baseboard and the top of the door. Apply wood glue to its back side and press it onto the door, nestled against the two installed rails and butted against the baseboard. Tack it in place with 18-gauge brads.

B] **Finish the door.** With the center stile installed on the door, use the furring strips as spacers to install the remaining two door rails, gluing and nailing them in place.









7 COMPLETE THE PATTERN

A] **Extend the center stile.** Measure, cut, and install a ½×6 rail to fit between the side stiles along the ceiling. In this case, the top rail dies into a newel post, and a notched piece connects it on a diagonal to the right-hand side stile. Measure and cut the uppermost section of the center stile so that it extends below the jamb—allowing just enough clearance for the door to open. Glue and tack it in place, as shown.

B] **Scribe the rail.** Measure, cut, and install the upper right-hand rail. In our location, it had to be scribed to die into the diagonal rail. To do that, start by cutting the rail a little long, then dry-fit the piece with its corner overlapping the diagonal board. Align a straightedge with the intersecting slope, and use it as a guide to mark your cutline with a utility knife, as shown. Use a miter saw to cut off the excess. Glue and tack the rail with its bottom edge aligned with the end of the center stile you just installed, concealing the gap above the door.

C] **Finish the wall.** Apply glue to the back of the final rail and tack it down. Now check to ensure that the door swings in either direction without interference. Then sand the boards and door with 120-grit sandpaper, caulk any gaps—except those around the door—and prime and paint your new paneled accent wall with a 2½-inch angled sash brush. ■

MORE PANEL PROJECTS
To find more ways to dress up plain walls, scan this page with the Blippar app or go to thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015

FRESH START

A simple plan to create attic play space spurs a surprising new look throughout this 1940 house

by Deborah Baldwin

photographs by Deborah Whitlaw Llewellyn

produced by Tisha Leung

styling by Brian Carter

LEFT Vaulting the ceiling and removing several walls dramatically altered the living space, where finds from the homeowners' travels now mingle comfortably with the original fireplace and casement windows *Sofas West Elm*
ABOVE Oversize aluminum-clad patio doors echo the casements while framing the view *Windows and patio doors Ply Gem Table Pottery Barn Chairs Restoration Hardware*

PEOPLE DON'T BUY JUST A HOUSE—they buy a whole package. How are the schools, what's the commute, and what will it really cost to update that bath? Then, after thoughtfully weighing all the pros and cons, they close their eyes and hope for the best.

It was no different for Gigi Pedraza and Omar Rodriguez. Careful perusal of the many possibilities in their target zone, a historic area near downtown Atlanta, nonetheless led them to a plain brick house whose main attributes weren't even inside.

Blame the setting—and wishful thinking. Along with "a fantastic neighborhood full of happy kids," as Gigi put it later, in a blog devoted to the inevitable redo, the

house had "a beautiful magnolia tree that we could turn into a playground with ropes" and "an unbelievable cherry tree right by the door that makes every spring look and feel as dreamy as possible."

Note no rhapsodizing about the house's great bones, fantastic flow, or unique period style: In dry historic-district parlance, the house was a "minimal traditional."

Gigi, who craves lofty open interiors, and Omar, whose taste runs toward rustic barn doors and exposed trusses, had purchased a one-story house with none of the above—just two bedrooms and a bath on the main floor, a bedroom and bath in the finished basement, and an unfinished attic attainable only by pull-down stairs.

But after nearly three years in the house, the couple, parents of two young girls and busy professionals with a passion for travel and entertaining, were hardly in the mood for a budget-wrenching redo.

What they had in mind, they told architect Pauline Ton-Lo, was turning about 200 square feet of dead attic space into a lofty playroom—connected to the first floor by stairs and a slide. "Not just for the kids," Gigi says of the latter, "but for the adults—after a party!"

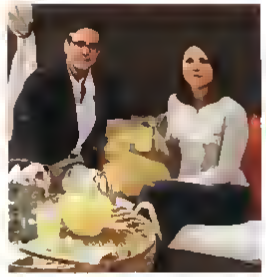
"Pauline was like, 'There's no code for interior slides—we don't have a lot of people in Georgia who do them!'" recalls Gigi, whose exuberance bubbles up even when the topic is as mundane as leaky pipes. "Then we thought, *A firemen's pole*..."

Luckily, the two women had been friends for several years, since the day both arrived at the playground, sleep deprived and with toddlers in tow, and began to talk.

As Gigi noted in her blog, she and Omar had fantasized about their "dream house" for years. This one had taken them halfway there simply by being in Druid Hills, a historic district near Emory University. "You can walk everywhere," Gigi says. "We have all the different styles of American architecture in the 20th century."

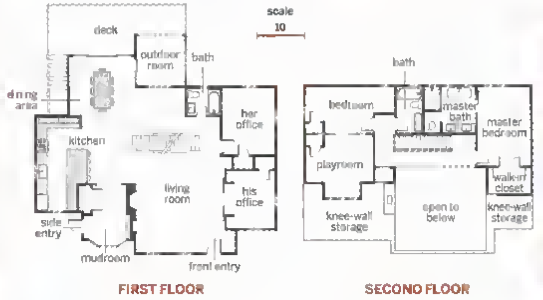
BELOW Lucca 6 left and Shanti, 8, dogged by Coconut enjoy near 360 degree views from the new oak and steel staircase, knee walls frame steps to the basement

BELOW Homeowners Omar Rodriguez and Gigi Pedraza relax in a new outdoor room off the deck. RIGHT Rustic wood touches include the custom barn-wood doors that set off Omar a first floor office. *Door hardware: Real Sliding Hardware. Pendant fixture: Kudzu Antique.*



FLOOR PLANS

The roof ridge rose 3 feet, allowing a shed dormer in front and a master suite and another bedroom, a bath, and a playroom—connected by a catwalk—in the former attic space. The first floor was opened up: the dining area was pushed out about 12 feet, and a deck and an outdoor room were added in back. These two floors went from 1,370 square feet of living space to 2,370.



ABOVE Existing base cabinets were painted gray and paired with a peninsula made from steel laminated cabinets. Specialty paint turned one wall into a magnetic chalkboard. *Steel cabinets: IKEA. Faucet: Delta. Stools: Cost Plus World Market.*

But the 1940 spec house they nabbed didn't pack a lot of charm. An earlier redo had moved the kitchen from the back of the house to former garage space along one side. Some windows had been plugged with glass block, and deferred maintenance had left the new homeowners holding a lengthy must-do list.

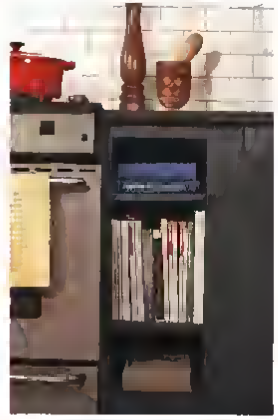
"The pipes were perforated in places, so the crawl space got full of bathroom water," says Gigi. "Which we didn't know until a bandyman was down there and my daughter flushed the toilet, and you can imagine what happened. We were so embarrassed, we never called him again." Pause. "I'm sure he remembers us."

Then a storm tore a tree out of the yard, slamming it down on a skylight over the stove. The couple repaired the damage while imagining how nice it would be to replace the kitchen—and have that play space.

Gigi fed her fantasies by clipping magazines and posting on Pinterest, where she revealed a weakness for the raw-steel, reclaimed-wood, sliding-barn-door, industrial-farmhouse school of interior design.

Ton-Lo listened to her friend talk about that slide, then quizzed her some more before batting back a bigger idea: Tear out a half-dozen interior walls and turn the entire first floor into a loft, with a vaulted ceiling. Erect an open staircase to a catwalk running across the house, with bedrooms and baths at either end. "Instead of a slide, I'd give them a balcony," says Ton-Lo, picturing the girls playing Juliet as they called down the open stairs.

To achieve more standing room upstairs, all they'd have to do is push the roof ridge back, allowing it to rise, and pop in a shed dormer facing the street—after, of course, rewiring, replumbing, and insulating the whole shebang while expanding the HVAC and redoing the kitchen and downstairs bath.



LEFT Niches flanking the existing range are a handy spot for cookbooks and magazines. *Subway tile, The Home Depot.*

Why stop there? A one-story addition could sidle up to the rear. Shaped like a lopsided A-frame, with a vaulted ceiling and lots of glass, it would give the nebbishy house a secret stylish identity—plus a new light-filled dining space.

The couple found the plan hard to resist. Expats from Peru (her) and Puerto Rico (him), they craved more sun and a better connection to the wooded yard. They both liked the idea of an open plan, too. As newlyweds, they had lived in a loft in Atlanta, carrying this early imprinting with them during a stint abroad and gravitating to another loft upon their return. The design conjured the familiar airiness of those earlier homes.

"I couldn't say no," Gigi says with a smile. The design was perfect—if a little pricier than what they originally planned.

Ton-Lo balanced the cost of the investment with budget-minded touches and trade-offs. Gigi reluctantly let go of her wished-for second-floor laundry room and also agreed to keep the old kitchen cabinets and appliances. To amp up meal prep, Ton-Lo suggested painting the cabinets, adding a peninsula, and creating a backdrop of to-the-ceiling tile.

"We had to find creative ways to get an impact but at a low cost," says Ton-Lo. "The materials were off the shelf but used in interesting ways. Instead of attaching a value like 'this is marble from Italy,' you use commercial-grade materials but in an unexpected, understated way."

The demolish-rebuild-and-retrofit team included general contractor James Lane, who worked with Ton-Lo in getting revisions past the local historic-district commission. The commissioners had no problem with rebuilding the front porch—the existing one was more 1970s than 1940s—but were less enthusiastic about replacing chafty window panes with thermal glass. The blueprint's raised ridge and front-facing dormer

ABOVE. The homeowners replaced upper cabinets with open shelves and made bold use of inexpensive materials like standard subway tile, highlighting the existing chimney-style range hood and splurges like the honed black granite countertops. *Cabinet paint: Sherwin-Williams's Peppercorn. Pulls and knobs: IKEA. Countertops: Daltile. Wall hung: Ohio farm baskets: Etsy.*

LEFT: The mudroom off the front facing side entrance was enlarged and has a new-period style bay window. Gym baskets and shoe cubbies keep kids' wear under control.

sparked much conversation, as did the original plan for the second floor, which would have exceeded required setbacks—the first floor was grandfathered—while also taxing the homeowners' budget. As time ticked by, everyone tried to go with the flow, but when one commissioner questioned the standing-seam roof on the rebuilt bay window, Gigi fought back. The roofing stayed.

"Maybe he was giving her a hard time because the back of the house has such a modern addition—it's awesome," Lane says of the one alteration outside the commission's purview. Ton-Lo designed it as "a contrast with the historic nature of the front, a juxtaposition of modern features with an old house." She adds, "I didn't want it to blend in."

Lane's bigger concern was how opening up the first floor would play out inside. "The catwalk had to be structurally tied to the existing front gable, so we had to run this huge beam from the front of the house to the back to support it," he explains. Ton-Lo, working with a structural engineer, looked for a way to avoid erecting a column to support the point where the front gable and main roofs would intersect. To maintain the openness of the vaulted ceiling, she added a hidden rafter that ties in to a second-floor beam. "That was tricky," she says.

Then there was the dramatic floating staircase, treads and risers meeting flush with no overhang on the sides or front edges, knee walls framing it as well as the basement stairs below. Metalworkers had to weld and install two steel handrails in place without burning the place down.

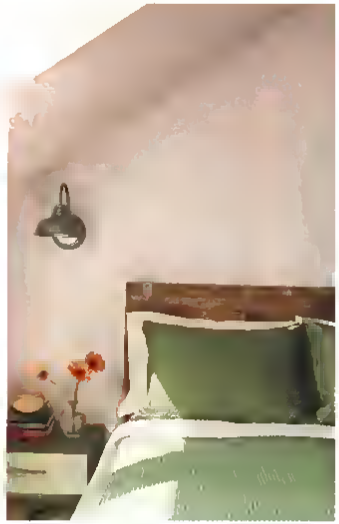
The redo timeline stretched to six months. Gigi, a self-described "control freak" whose job as a consultant involves project management and budget-shaving, bird-dogged the architect and building crew. "To me it's important to have a consistent look across the house," she says. "I wanted the materials to be subdued and natural." The team used barn wood to make the door to Omar's home office, repurposed attic joists as decorative trusses, and united the flooring with a contemporary dark stain.

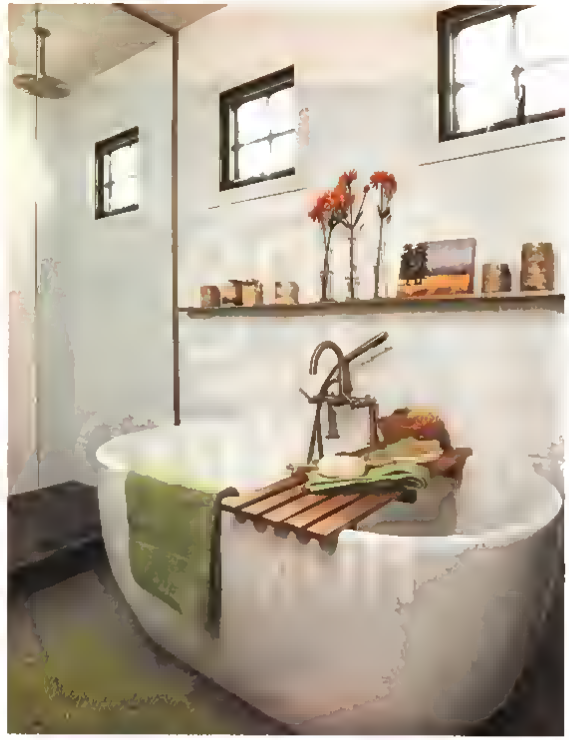
"From the street, you think it's a two-bedroom bungalow, very small and old, then you walk in and everybody's like, 'Wow,'" says Gigi. "It's completely open, so different from the other houses in our neighborhood."

She adds, "Our house is not huge, but we use every single space. The girls have desks in my office so we can work together. Everybody hangs around the kitchen. We have dinner in the dining room every day."

As for the playroom, the family finally got that too. It fits snugly under the new dormer, one more secret in a house whose facade still harks to another time. ■

Brightened by a new shed dormer, the second-floor play space has a guest-ready daybed with drawers for toys and linens. *Paint: Sherwin-Williams's Peppercorn (window wall) and Zurich White (other walls and trim).*





ABOVE: The new master suite is tucked under a gable in former attic space. Budget-minded bath finishes include an aluminum picture rail, porcelain floor tile, a small acrylic tub, and oversize wall tile in an updated pattern. *Sconce: Barn Light Electric. Floor and wall tile: Floor and Decor. Tub and tub filler: Signature Hardware.*

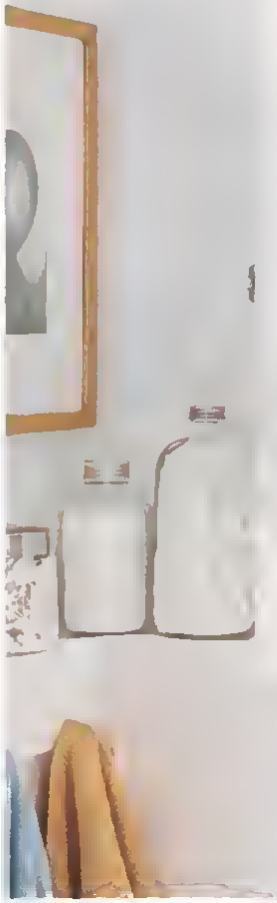
SHOP THIS STYLE
To find furnishings similar to those used in this house, scan this page with the Blippar app or go to **wayfair.com/thisoldhouse**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 101

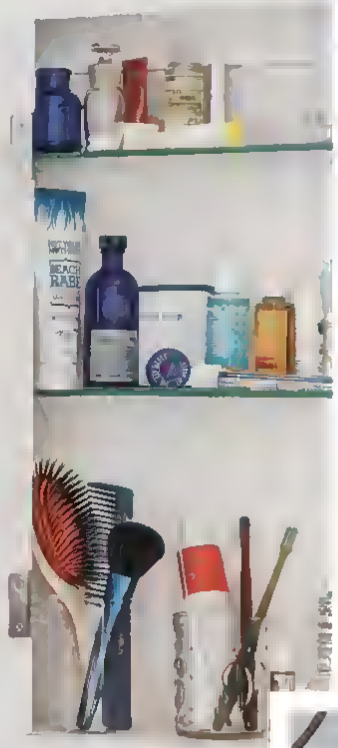
LIFE-CHANGING TIPS FOR A MORE ORGANIZED HOME

We asked pro organizers for strategies that help them conquer chaos in their own lives. The result: 39 secrets that will streamline your day and restore your peace of mind (promise!)

BY **MEGAN BAKER**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BURCU AVSAR**
STYLING BY **GOZDE EKER**



MAGNETIC STRIP
Tack one of these knife racks onto the back of the medicine cabinet door to hold clippers, tweezers, lip-balm tins, and other tiny metal objects. *$15, ikea.com*



LAZY SUSAN
A stainless-steel turntable under the sink simplifies finding the right toiletries, since you don't have to rummage in the back of the cabinet to locate them. *$20, containerstore.com*

BATH

It's where you start and end the day. Keep it clutter-free by making a place for even the smallest of items

CORRAL THE GOODS It makes sense to leave out those things you reach for every day—just don't let them pile up. "I use acrylic trays on top of the vanity to hold frequently used toiletries," says Virginia-based organizer Kathy Jenkins. That way it's easy to lift a whole tray to clean underneath." Size trays to hold specific groups of items so that there's no room for extra junk.

DIVIDE RIGHT The big void in a drawer invites a mess. The solution: Containerize the inside. Buy an assortment of small bins, but first, cut a piece of paper to the exact size of the drawer's interior. Take it with you to the store to help piece together the combination of bins that works best.

GO VERTICAL You can double the amount of functional storage under your sink, says Texas-based organizer Helene Segura. The secret? Tiered shelf inserts you can pop into the cabinet that follow the contours of the pipes. Many are adjustable, so you can customize shelf spacing to match your needs.

TOOL CADDY
Assemble a cleaning kit for each bath and stow supplies in a handled container that's easy to grab for a tour de-scrub
Unfinished toolbox $20 homedepot com

GET HOOKED Putting bath towels back onto bars is tough for kids' little hands. To keep wet ones from piling up on the floor, use hooks instead, says Nebraska-based pro Amy Tokos. Choose individual hooks and you can space them far enough apart that wet towels won't take forever to dry.

KEEP EXTRA STOCK ELSEWHERE No need to keep surplus supplies in the bath. Put extra soaps and shampoos in a labeled bin, and move them to a closet elsewhere in the house, along with those warehouse-size packages of tissues and TP.

KITCHEN

Prevent a pileup by thinning out your cooking supplies and allowing yourself quick access to the tools and supplies you use most often

PARE DOWN For food storage containers, a good rule of thumb is: If every single one was full, would it still fit in the fridge? If not, you have more than you can use, says Tokos. Have items you use infrequently—such as a special tool or pan—but want to keep? Move them to a box and tuck it in the attic or basement. If you don't get something out for a year, you can let it go.

KEEP THINGS CLOSE "I'm right-handed, so I store frequently used herbs and spices to the right of the stove, where they're easy to grab and put away," says Nashville pro Cynthia Lindsey. She groups the rest by category, so that she can get at exactly what she needs for baking or cooking a specialty dish.

GIVE YOURSELF A BOOST High ceilings mean lots of vertical space, but it's useless unless you can reach things on upper shelves, says Birmingham-based organizer Amanda LeBlanc. She uses a rolling can rack on tall pantry shelves to help her reach cans without having to run for the step stool. These racks work best for multiples of the same item, dispensing one can at a time.

Pull-down shelves serve a similar purpose, bringing an array of canned goods within reach.

LOSE THE JUNK DRAWER A drawer without a purpose is a recipe for a mess. Segura suggests a new mind-set: "I don't keep a junk drawer. I keep a utility drawer." This is where I put things like scissors, tape, batteries, and screwdrivers. When I go to put something in there, I ask myself: *Is this something that will help me fix a problem?* If not, it goes somewhere else—or maybe into the garbage."

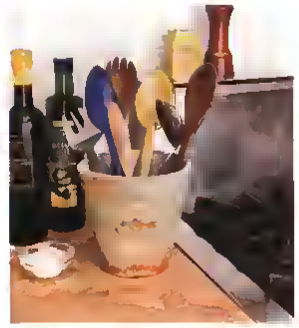
MAKE A LIST No need to stock duplicates of staples you already have. Instead, the pros recommend keeping a list in the pantry as you run out of items. That way you'll know exactly what to pick up at the store.

KEEP A CLEAN SLATE Put one thing out on the counter and it becomes a magnet for clutter. "If you keep things out, you're just inviting yourself to leave more things there," says New York City pro Julie Morgenstern. Limit yourself to items you use every day—for Morgenstern, it's the toaster—and put everything else away after using it.

UTENSIL CROCK
A weathered, heat-resistant terra-cotta pot by the stove can stylishly store the few cooking utensils you use every day.

STACKABLE CANISTERS
Flat tops make it easy to stack food storage jars, helping conserve precious pantry space. Clear glass makes it easy to ID what's inside.
$15–$20 for six; weckjars.com

SPICE BOX
Group seasonings by use or cuisine and store upright in a bin so that you can pull them all out at once. Label lids to make finding the right jar a cinch.



CUP AND SPOON HOOKS
Make it easier to put your hands on the right measuring cup or spoon by hanging each one from a labeled cup hook on the inside of a cabinet door.

COOKWARE RACKS
Slide skillets into vertical risers that let you grab a single size without fumbling through a whole pile. File lightweight baking sheets and muffin tins into the slots of a plate rack to keep them at the ready.
Chrome rack $11 rubbermaid.com. Wood rack $8 containerstore.com

MEET OUR PROS

KATHY JENKINS
Come to Order
Mechanicsville, Va.

With two sons, ages 12 and 15, Jenkins specializes in creating organizing systems for families and students.

AMANDA LEBLANC
The Amendes
Birmingham, Ala.

LeBlanc and her husband have two daughters, ages 9 and 11. They live in a 3,200-square-foot Tudor-style house.

CYNTHIA LINDSEY
Organizing Ease
Nashville

Lindsey specializes in whole-house decluttering. She recently moved into a new house with her husband and teenage daughter.

JULIE MORGENSTERN
Julie Morgenstern Enterprises
New York, N.Y.

Morgenstern is the author of three best-selling organization books. She lives in a 900-square-foot city apartment.

NELENE SEGURA
LivingOrder
San Antonio

Segura, a former teacher, is the author of two organizing books, one of which is geared toward teachers and their classrooms.

AMY TOKOS
Freshly Organized
Omaha, Neb.

A background in engineering led Tokos to a career in organization with a focus on efficiency. She and her husband have four kids, ages 12 to 18.

ENTRYWAY

Comings and goings run more smoothly when you have a drop spot for frequently used items

FURNISH THE SPACE Take inspiration from Jenkins, who uses a Victorian-era dresser to organize her entry. "The drawers hold gloves, hats, and other outdoor accessories, and the mirror on top gives us a place to do a spot check before we leave," she says. Another popular option: cube storage systems with fabric bins for each family member's gear.

MAP IT OUT Make organization a no-brainer with thoughtful placement. Put sports equipment or school bags on the way to the car or very nearby. Then kids can grab them as they're headed out the door and put them right back as they return. "The farther away you put those things, the harder kids have to work, and the less likely it is that things will get back to where they belong," says Tokos.

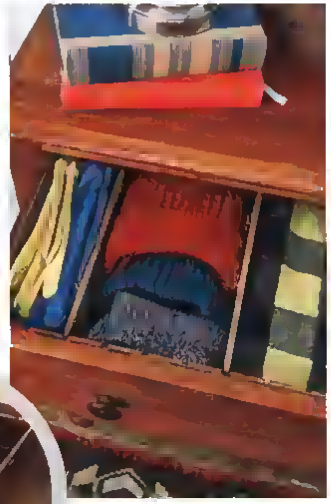
A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING Get the most out of entry storage by giving each group of items its own designated space. Labels can help. Says Morgenstern: "If a shelf or a cabinet or a drawer is marked MISCELLANEOUS, it's easy to put things into but impossible to retrieve things from."

PEG RAIL

Shaker-style wood pegs hung by the door make it easy to hang hats, scarves, and even leashes on your way in or grab on the way out. *$25, landofnod.com*

CHARGING STATION

Create a neat place to power up phones and tablets. Make one, as we did, by drilling holes in the bottom of a wood mail sorter, to thread cords through, then give it a coat of color.



MAGNETIC BOWL

Made to store nuts and bolts, this hardware-store find is also a great place to toss keys, loose change, and the like. A coat of spray paint is all it needs to go from industrial to charming.

DIY DRAWER DIVIDERS

Dentil molding inside the front and back allows wood-slat partitions to slide in. Bonus: They're easily adjustable as needs change.

PHOTO (INSET): MARRED KONJ'T, ME. BUT. A

UNDER THE BED BIN

Take advantage of dead space beneath the bed to store off-season linens or extra blankets. A bin fitted with casters and a lid is a snap to access, and a cloth lining is soft on fabrics. *$89, thecompanystore.com*

BEDROOM

Minimizing the amount of visible stuff helps maintain your sleep zone as a relaxing retreat

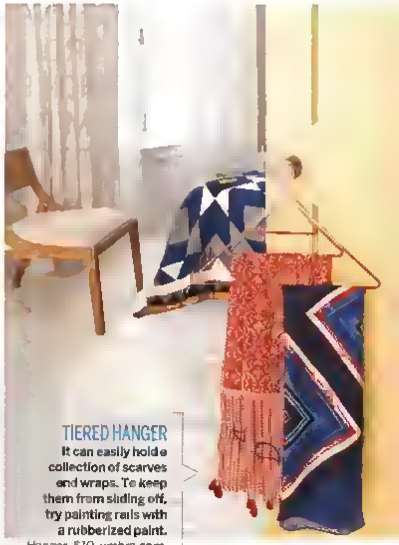
SHELVE YOUR CLOTHES Store clothing on closet shelves rather than in a dresser, suggests Jenkins. "When you shove things in a drawer, you end up constantly wearing the stuff on top because you don't want to dig down to the bottom," she says. On shelves, it's easier to keep track of what you have.

GET BEHIND BINS In the closet, open bins are best for containing things you reach for frequently. But Morgenstern suggests lidded containers for infrequently used items so that they can be stacked up out of the way. Just remember to label what's inside.

CONSIDER THE IN-BETWEEN Segura recommends setting aside 6 to 8 inches of rod space or installing a valet hook to hang "dirty" clothes "which maybe you didn't wear all day, so they're not really dirty, but you don't want to hang them with the clean clothes, either." Those are typically the things that get thrown on a chair or at the foot of the bed, so having a place to put them helps create some order.

REMOVE TEMPTATION Limit storage where you don't really need it. "The nightstand in my bedroom used to be a junk drawer for anything we didn't have a spot for," says Tokos. "We've switched to a simple round table with no drawer, and now we only keep things there that we really use."

SEE YOUR SUCCESS Visual clutter can be as damaging to your organized mind-set as physical clutter, says LeBlanc. "If you create a streamlined look, like using all the same hangers in the closet, you're much more likely to maintain it." ■



TIERED HANGER

It can easily hold a collection of scarves and wraps. To keep them from sliding off, try painting rails with a rubberized paint.

Hanger: $10, umbra.com
Paint: rustoleum.com

FROM THE TOH TV JOB SITE

Worth THE Wait

PATIENCE, VISION, AND VERY FORTUNATE TIMING ALL PLAYED A ROLE IN BRINGING AN 1850 BRICK ROWHOUSE BACK FROM THE BRINK IN THE CURRENT TOH TV PROJECT

BY **JILL CONNORS**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANTHONY TIEULI**
STYLING BY **CAROLINE WOODWARD**

good for another 165 years
Unbeknownst to homeowner Angela Daigle the brick facade of her Greek Revival rowhouse was bowing out and had to be shored up by *TOH* general contractor Tom Silva. He also installed a new energy-efficient front door and exposed the recessed entryway.

THESE PAGES
ARCHITECT: **SpaceCraft Architecture**
INTERIOR DESIGN: **K. Marshall Design**
FRONT DOOR: **Simpson**

FLOORING: **Lumber Liquidators**
WALL OVENS, COOKTOP AND VENT HOOD: **Wolf**
BUILT-IN REFRIGERATOR: **Sub-Zero**

streamlined kitchen
A new efficient layout arrays the work areas in convenient proximity, with wall ovens, cooktop, and built-in refrigerator (at far end) all arranged along one wall, and the sink built into the parallel island just a step away. Floors of Cumaru, a Brazilian hardwood, cast a warm glow.

ANGELA DAIGLE

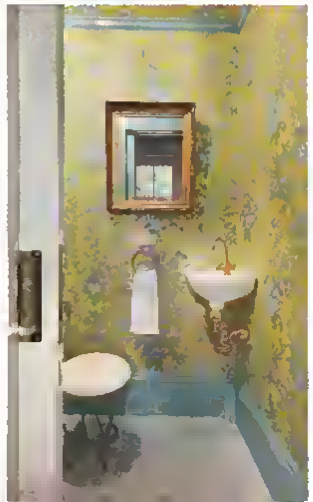
"I love seeing people's personalities in their decor," says homeowner Angela Daigle. A traveler at heart, she has collected everything from vivid Asian textiles to classic 19th-century ironstone. No matter what she discovers or where she finds it, her favorite old object is the home she always returns to, an 1850 Greek Revival rowhouse in Charlestown, the oldest neighborhood in Boston.

After 10 years of living in the house and saving for a renovation, Angela became increasingly alarmed about its condition. The second-floor bathroom's tub lost a claw foot and collapsed, the third-floor bathroom's shower door fell off, and the kitchen appliances were sputtering. "When the skylight started raining on me," she says, "I knew I had to act."

That's when she set out on the path that led to her house being chosen for the current season of *This Old House* TV. The trick would be to make the most of the house's modest footprint, 1,500 square feet over three stories.

Working with architect Sally DeGan, Angela envisioned a more open first-floor layout with spaces to entertain and to display her passion for vibrant colors and her collected objects, a roomier kitchen with a windowed bumpout showcasing the view to the backyard, and a third-

kitchen island paradise
The original black-and-white galley kitchen (INSET) gets an upgrade with a generous island and a custom stain that gives the cabinetry the appealing look of old painted furniture. Above the marble-hex backsplash, a lighted wall cabinet with period-style seeded glass doors and arched muntins displays the homeowner's collection of antique ironstone pitchers and tureens.



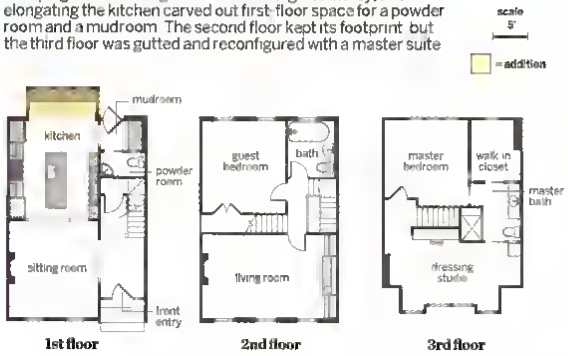
flower-power powder room
A pocket door, a miniature corner sink with decorative plumbing, and arresting floral wallpaper trimmed with aqua painted baseboards make the most of the 3-by-6-foot first-floor half bath.

jewel-box bumpout
The 40-square-foot kitchen addition features a copper roof, windows on three sides, and original brick that Tom Silva salvaged and reused.

period perfect
An architectural-salvage-yard find, the white marble mantel in the first-floor sitting room brings period-appropriate Greek Revival details—pilasters and a central urn—to the original fireplace, which had been outfitted with a wood mantel by previous owners.

floor plans

Bumping out the dining nook, abandoning a chimney, and elongating the kitchen carved out first-floor space for a powder room and a mudroom. The second floor kept its footprint, but the third floor was gutted and reconfigured with a master suite.



THESE PAGES
CABINETRY
Plain & Fancy
MARBLE COUNTERTOPS
International Stone
MARBLE BACKSPLASH
Tile Bar
GLOBE PENDANTS
Rejuvenation
PULL-DOWN FAUCET
Waterstone
SINK FAUCET AND FITTINGS: **Herbeau**
BATHS INK: **Bates and Bates**
WINDOWS: **Harvey Building Products**
SHADES: **Budget Blinds**
SITTING ROOM RUG
Landry & Arcari
WALLPAPER
Brunschwig & Fils

floor master suite with a walk-in closet and spa-like bath. "When you have a small space like a rowhouse, it doesn't take much to really make a big difference," says DeGan. "Removing a wall between the front room and kitchen, for example, transformed the entire first floor."

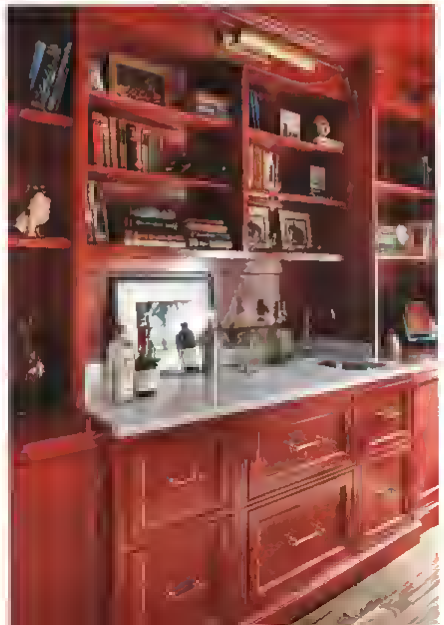
At just 40 square feet, the judicious kitchen bumpout accommodates a built-in banquette where Angela can seat up to six around the dining table. That one small addition opens up the kitchen and creates space for a tiny—but useful—3-by-6-foot powder room, yet preserves the outdoor kitchen area. Likewise, up on the third floor DeGan called for a small change with big impact: a shed dormer to connect two doghouse dormers, creating a multipurpose "studio" space where there had barely been room to store luggage.

For *TOH* general contractor Tom Silva, building a bumpout and a shed dormer seemed like an easy assignment—until he came up against a brick wall. Two of them, actually. Both the front and rear brick facades were pulling away from the house by as much as 2 inches in places. "Over time, the roof load had worked the brick walls in and out so they were breaking away from the house," says Tom. "The challenge was to pull them in just the right amount without affecting the rowhouses on both sides." So he reframed the front and back walls, top to bottom, and tied the brick back into them.

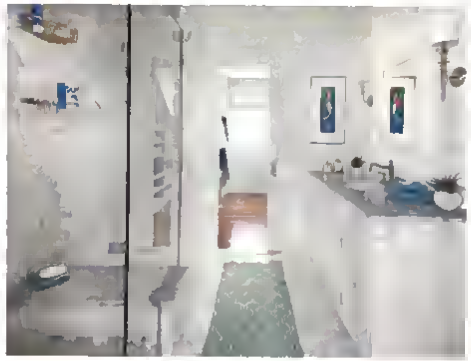
With the new spaces carved out, Angela and designer Kathy Marshall had a blank canvas to play up sentiment and soul by highlighting her collections, including 19th-century Dutch oil paintings, regional still lifes, and antique Chinese carvings. "I enjoy having things around me that reflect my family, my interests, my travel," says Angela.

Nowhere is this more striking than in the distinctive kitchen cabinetry, finished with a custom stain Marshall had created that happened to complement a hue in Angela's oil paintings. Indeed, everything in the house reflects Angela's eye for color, pattern, and form. She's always envisioned a home where she could share her love of old architecture, period details, and collected objects. So it's only fitting that after the renovation, she opened her house to the annual Charlestown Preservation Society Historic House Tour, inviting everyone in to see where she's been. ■

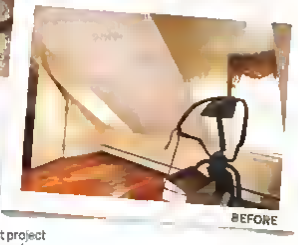
cozy quarters
The second-floor front room's dark marble fireplace surround is original, a distinctive detail from the Greek Revival era; a gas insert was installed to make the fireplace functional again. The homeowner's collections from her travels in Asia include textiles and artwork displayed in the room.



Asian inspired
Designed to evoke lacquered chinoiserie, floor-to-ceiling cabinetry in ruby red anchors the second-floor front room—Angela's true living room—with a wet bar and illuminated display shelves.



cool and inviting
The 6-by-8-foot master bath features a roomy marble-tiled shower with glass walls, and a marble-topped vanity. A pocket door opens to the much-needed walk-in closet.



height and light
RIGHT: The roofline between the old doghouse dormers in the third-floor front room made standing up a challenge. ABOVE: Bridging the dormer roofline created a spot for another pair of windows. Now the space multitasks as a dressing room, a guest room, and a reading aerie.

BEFORE

NEXT STOP: LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS
Tune in to PBS beginning on January 1 (check local listings) to catch the premier of TOH TV's latest project as the crew takes on the ambitious makeover of a 1960s Colonial for a family of five. Inside: the kids get a new wing above the garage, while Mom and Dad get a professional kitchen and a screened porch looking onto a wetlands preserve. To see a preview and "before" photos, go to **thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015.**

THESE PAGES:
MANTEL SCONCES: **House of Antique Hardware**
CABINETRY: **Plain & Fancy**
PAINT: **Custom color, The Home Depot**
BRASS PULLS: **Clarke Distribution**
CHAISE LONGUE: **Grange**
SHOWER TILE: **Tile Bar**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 101

<ALL ABOUT>

Wood Countertops

Visually rich and warm to the touch, these natural beauties are making a comeback. Here's how to determine if they'll work in your house BY SARAH STEBBINS

CALL THEM THE CURE for the cold of common stainless steel. After being eclipsed by showy stones like granite and marble and maintenance-free engineered materials like quartz and solid surfacing, natural-wood countertops are enjoying a real revival. Constructed from pieces of hardwood laminated together with glue for strength and stability, they provide a warm, organic landing surface in a kitchen, one that is wonderfully forgiving, gentle on dishware, and able to absorb the noise of a busy household. Wood can also be revived if damaged; if it gets dinged, stained, or gouged, you can refinish it.

The majority of wood countertops are made from traditional butcher block, and while they may see some mild meal prep, they're rarely used for chopping these days. They're favored more for their looks. Less expensive woods often line the kitchen as a handsome, budget-friendly surface, pricier species top islands or breakfast bars, where they provide a welcome textural contrast or a furniture-like finish. The variety of woods available is impressive, from subtly grained maple to deep, rich walnut to dramatic mesquite to exotic iroko. Yes, wood is a good choice, but it does require some attention. *This Old House*'s guide to buying, installing, and maintaining these countertops will ensure that the surface you select will look and perform beautifully for years.

BUTCHER-BLOCK BACKSTORY
Up until the 1880s, butchers worked on thick rounds of sycamore, which were prone to splitting. In the early 1900s, it was discovered that pieces of hard maple glued together in big blocks provided a stronger, more durable surface that better stood up to meatcutters' cleavers.

PHOTOS: JANE BALFOUR (DESIGN: MARGOT HARRIS); COURTESY BUTCHER BLOCK (CENTER)

VITALS

WHAT DO THEY COST? From $12 to more than $200 per square foot, uninstalled, depending on species, thickness, construction, and finish; add 5 to 10 percent more for most factory finishes.

DO THEY HOLD UP? Properly installed and cared for, wood countertops can last as long as you live in your home. Factory finishes generally come with a warranty. It can range from one year to a lifetime—and may only cover glued joint separation.

DIY OR HIRE A PRO? A homeowner comfortable with cutting and matching can install them in a weekend (making sink and faucet cutouts may void any warranty). For a pro install, add $8 per square foot, minimum.

WHERE TO BUY? Order from kitchen showrooms and custom retailers or shop at home centers and big box stores.

A storage island puts thick edge-grain butcher block center stage. Similar to shown: 2-inch edge-grain maple countertop, $90 per square foot, uninstalled; glumber.com

Are wood countertops right for you?

They lend character and lasting good looks, but they also need some TLC. Weigh the facts before investing

PROS

> **They can be budget-friendly.** A butcher-block counter made from birch or beech can cost little more than laminate and less than half the starter price for natural stone or engineered materials

> **They can be easy to install.** DIYers can cut prefab butcher-block tops to fit around corners, sinks, and appliances much more easily than most stone. Finishing wood is even more straightforward.

> **They're strong—and soft.** Unlike with stone, there's no clatter when you set down a plate or a glass, and dropped dishes are less likely to break. Wood also quiets the whir of appliances, while stone will amplify such noise.

> **They can be refinished.** Knife scratches, deep gouges, even burn marks can be sanded out and a DIY finish restored to look brand-new.

> **They're green.** Most companies offer sustainably grown, Forest Stewardship Council–certified woods, including exotics. And while wood counters last for years, once worn out, they can be recycled.

CONS

> **They move.** All wood expands and contracts with changes in atmospheric moisture, so there is the potential for these countertops to cup, warp, and gap if not properly constructed, installed, and maintained. The thicker the counter, the more stable it will be.

> **They require maintenance.** Unfinished wood counters need monthly oiling. DIY clear-coated surfaces may require refinishing every five years or so. Factory-finished counters may never need recoating, but if they do, you'll pay to ship them, even under warranty.

> **They demand a watchful eye.** Liquids can penetrate wood, causing stains, cracks, and joint separation—vinegar can actually dissolve glue—so spills, especially water around the sink, should be wiped up right away.

> **They're not fireproof.** Wood and stove burners don't mix; check with your stove maker for required clearances. To prevent scorching, use trivets under hot pots.

HOW THEY'RE MADE

Whether traditional butcher block or laminated full-width boards, wood countertops are generally pieced together in one of these three ways

EDGE GRAIN

The most common type of butcher block is made from boards placed on their sides and glued so that the narrower edge forms the surface. The strips may be continuous lengths with no joints or random-length pieces that are finger-jointed.

BEST FOR Large areas, like a long kitchen counter or island top. Because wood only moves in one direction across its width, edge-grain butcher block is more stable than other wood countertops. It can also be less pricey.

END GRAIN

Blocks of edge-grain wood are turned on end to form a grid that's glued together. End-grain butcher block requires more wood and labor, so you'll pay about 40 percent more than for edge grain. Because it's also more prone to movement, end grain is often thicker to counteract cupping and warping.

BEST FOR Cutting on, since end grain is easiest on knives and least likely to show blade marks. Now favored more for its checkerboard look than its functionality.

FACE GRAIN

Also known as flat grain or plank grain, 4- to 12-inch-wide boards are laid flat and edge-glued, forming an almost seamless surface that highlights the natural patterns in the wood. This may expose soft areas in the grain, making these tops more likely to show scratches, dents, and dings.

BEST FOR Dining islands, table and bar tops, desks—wherever you want a fine-furniture appearance, not a workhorse.

PHOTOS: ALEX HAYDEN, (OPPOSITE PAGE) LISA SHIN. ILLUSTRATIONS: ARTHUR MOUNT

Wood choices

These edge-grain samples showcase just 10 of the more than 40 hardwoods available today

Mesquite
PRICE $151 per sq. ft.*
MAKER DeVos Custom Woodworking
HIGHLIGHTS Hardest domestic wood. Mineral streaks add character to reddish-brown strips.

Brazilian cherry
PRICE $115 per sq. ft.
MAKER The Grothouse Lumber Company
HIGHLIGHTS Hardest of the woods shown, this fine-grain exotic is tough to scratch or dent.

Birch
PRICE $12 per sq. ft.
MAKER IKEA, sold only as a 1½-inch-thick prefab top.
HIGHLIGHTS Neutral, light-colored wood with a fine grain.

American walnut
PRICE $60 per sq. ft.
MAKER John Boos & Co.
HIGHLIGHTS Prized for its rich chocolate colors and striking black grain; perfect as an accent piece on an island.

Iroko
PRICE $115 per sq. ft.
MAKER The Grothouse Lumber Company
HIGHLIGHTS An African import, bright gold boards mellow in time to a teak-like brown.

Bamboo
PRICE $98 per sq. ft.
MAKER Heirloom Wood Countertops, sold at The Home Depot
HIGHLIGHTS Imported grass; heat treating can give it a caramel hue.

Bolivian rosewood
PRICE $200 per sq. ft.
MAKER The Grothouse Lumber Company
HIGHLIGHTS Dense, heavy, variegated wood with black stripes on a rich brown background.

Hard maple
PRICE $60 per sq. ft.
MAKER John Boos & Co.
HIGHLIGHTS Classic butcher block material that is exceptionally strong, with a straight, uniform grain.

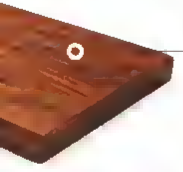
White oak
PRICE $12 per sq. ft.
MAKER Williamsburg Butcher Block Co., sold at Lumber Liquidators only as a prefab top.
HIGHLIGHTS Showy grain on warm brown strips.

Saxon wood
PRICE $150 per sq. ft.
MAKER The Grothouse Lumber Company
HIGHLIGHTS New South American find, yellow-brown wood with gray and black streaks.

* All prices are for 1½-inch-thick butcher block, uninstalled, except as noted.

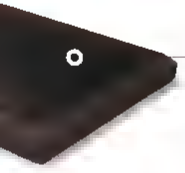
Give it an edge

Wood is easily tooled, so it lends itself to intricate designs. Here are standard edge profiles as well as a few fancier variations



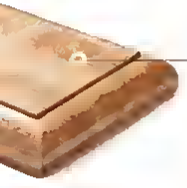
ROUNDOVER

This simple, classic profile (also called an eased edge) is slightly rounded. It goes with any style interior and makes sweeping up crumbs a breeze.



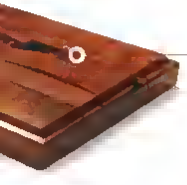
CHAMFER

Also known as a beveled edge, this profile boasts a bold angle that works for contemporary as well as traditional kitchens.



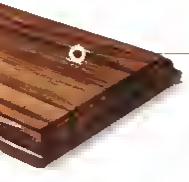
LARGE ROUNDOVER WITH FILLET

A steeply rounded edge with a decorative ridge typically ⅛ to ¼ inch high. An elegant, traditional look that requires a little more attention when cleaning.



OGEE

An edge that curves in and then out somewhat like an S. This version is topped with a fillet for added dimension.



LARGE ROMAN OGEE

The S-curve is reversed and the steep arc lends a more formal look.

Sample edge profiles
DeVos Custom Woodworking

FINISH OPTIONS

A wood kitchen counter is incomplete without a food-safe protective coating on all sides and edges.

OIL

For a matte look and a food-safe surface, you can cut on, use FDA-approved mineral oil. It seeps in to make wood moisture-, heat-, and stain-resistant. Or try a nonpetroleum-based walnut oil or a "curing oil" such as pure tung oil that hardens to form an imperceptible film that will wear but won't peel.

OIL-WAX BLEND

Made from mineral oil and beeswax or paraffin wax, this finish formula adds another layer of protection against moisture and helps seal the oil into the wood. Apply liberally with a clean cloth in the direction of the wood grain; let sit for 20 minutes; remove excess; and buff to a satiny finish.

CLEAR COAT

Urethane, acrylic, or resin curing oil finishes provide superior protection against water, stains, and wear and are food safe once fully cured. But reviving a worn or damaged top means stripping it and refinishing. Proprietary finishes offered by some companies cannot be matched but may never need recoating.

DIY like a pro

Use cardboard templates to trim prefab tops to size with a circular saw and a router, or send templates to a manufacturer; many will cut and ship slabs for free (cutouts and curves cost extra). On open-top base cabinets, fill with plywood fastening strips every foot; for solid-top cabinets, create air space with thin furring strips to allow moisture to escape. Center holes in the strips and drive a screw fitted with a fender washer up through each hole, into the countertop. Find the full step-by-step at thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015

P. 0. 05.: JEFF SABIN; TOP: DOUGLAS PEACOCK/GAP PHOTOS; BOTTOM: JAIME TH OPPOSITE PAGE: TOP: ANDREW DOP. A. BAS; U. ISTOCK (3D TOM); JAL ANKRASS; ALEX MAKHONG; ARTHUR MOUNT

TLC for wood countertops

CLEAN AND SANITIZE> **Wipe down the surface daily** with a damp cloth and a small amount of dish soap; follow with a clean, damp cloth. To de-germ, spritz with a solution of 1 part white vinegar to 4 parts water; let sit for 10 minutes, then wipe away. Avoid harsh cleansers with ammonia or bleach, which can eat away the finish and raise the grain.

REMOVE STAINS AND ODORS> **Sprinkle the affected area** with a generous amount of table salt and rub it in with a lemon quarter, squeezing juice on the counter top as you go. Let the mixture sit for a few minutes, then wipe with a clean, damp cloth.

HIDE SCRATCHES AND BURNS> **Rub on a colored paraffin-wax stick**, such as FastCap Softwax (fastcap.com), in a shade that matches the wood. Remove excess with a plastic scraper and buff with a cloth. To remove deeper cuts and burns, begin with a coarse sandpaper, step up to finer grits, and finish with a very fine grit; reapply oil or an oil-wax blend to finish.

FILL SPACES> **Melt a 1-to-4 mixture** of beeswax or household paraffin wax and mineral oil in a double boiler. Rub the warm mixture into any splits or cracks with a clean cloth to seal them.

To stain or not to stain?

Adding a stain can enhance the color and grain of a wood countertop, but you'll pay 5 to 10 percent more than you would for the same species in its natural state. You can get a pricey look for less, however, by choosing an inexpensive, light-colored species (such as beech) and staining it a rich color (like walnut). To DIY, sand off any finish and use a lint-free cotton cloth or natural-bristle brush to apply the stain, then wipe off the excess. When dry, add a food-safe clear coat. But never use stained butcher block as a cutting surface.

PRO TIP

"To get a uniform look with stain, apply a prestain wood conditioner with a brush or cloth first. It temporarily fills in the grain, so the color will be absorbed more evenly."

—DAN VOS, OWNER, DeVos CUSTOM WOODWORKING, DRIPPING SPRINGS, TEXAS

CONSIDER THE SINK

For a water-resistant barrier, all cutouts, edges, and surfaces must be treated with your choice of finish to seal out moisture. "Undermount sinks are ideal with wood countertops," says Paul Grothouse, owner, The Grothouse Lumber Company (glumber.com). Cutouts that extend slightly beyond the sink lip and over the bowl prevent standing water from saturating the edge, making the counter easier to maintain. Drop-in sinks work best with clear-coated or factory-finished countertops along with a flexible sealant beneath the rim to protect the wood. Avoid marine varnish; while water resistant, this high-VOC finish is not food safe.

THE SLAB LOOK

A single slice of wood, often with a live edge that follows the contours of the tree, is a sought-after look for a counter that doesn't see heavy use. But slabs' variable density and limited supply make them impractical in a kitchen. Search online for custom and specialty suppliers or find a local woodworker to source and install one

Shop smarter

Look for solid wood. Avoid particleboard or MDF with wood veneer, which can swell when exposed to moisture and limits sanding to fix stains or nicks

Measure correctly. To get an accurate price, measure the tops of your base cabinets, then factor in the overhang you want. 1 to 1½ inches is typical. On an island, a 12- to 16-inch overhang allows for pulling up stools

Inspect for gaps. Joints between strips or boards should be minuscule and consistent. If there are noticeable gaps, it's more likely they'll open up farther becoming noticeably unglued

Wood counters to suit every style

From classic to quirky, six kitchens that show how wood countertops can really wow

1> POLISHED TRADITIONAL With its rich color and fancy edge profile, this glossy island top looks at home with a marble backsplash and copper range. Similar to shown: 2-inch Iroko, $153 per sq. ft. jaaranwoodcountertops.com

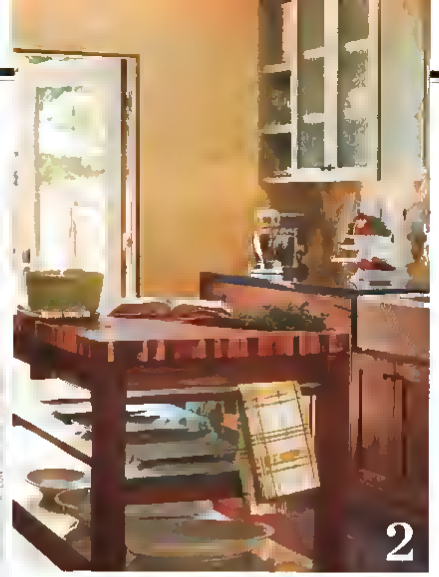
2> ORGANIC CLASSIC Crafted from varied species, this unique counter celebrates wood's natural beauty. Similar to shown: 2-inch end-grain cherry, maple, and mahogany butcher block, $250 per sq. ft. brookscustom.com

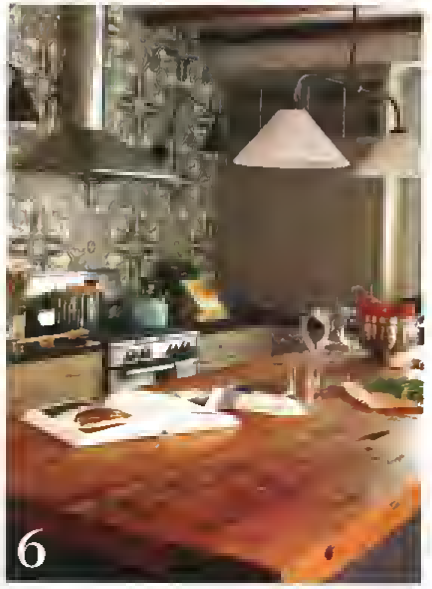
3> MODERN COTTAGE Bamboo gives light-colored cabinets and bright accents updated flair. Shown: 1½-inch caramelized perquet prefab island top, $26 per sq. ft., and ¾-inch vertical-grain prefab-panel tabletop, $17 per sq. ft. teragran.com

4> UPDATED CRAFTSMAN Simple, sturdy cabinetry in rich, earthy colors calls for a warm, neutral-colored wood island top. Similar to shown: 1½-inch edge-grain beech, $78 per sq. ft. Heirloom Wood Countertops; homedepot.com

5> REFRESHED FARMHOUSE Tight grain and a robust reddish hue make a cherry counter and backsplash a focal point in a space washed with white. Similar to shown: 1½-inch edge-grain American cherry prefab work top, $300, lumberliquidators.com

6> RUSTIC AND ECLECTIC Salvaged fir floor joists repurposed as a plank-grain top add character to a space that blends industrial and old-world elements. Similar to shown: 2½-inch reclaimed fir, $60 per sq. ft., windfalllumber.com





Jacuzzi

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Why the Jacuzzi® Hydrotherapy Walk-In Tub is the Best…

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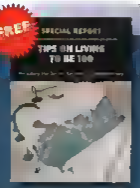
- ✓ **Comfortable Seating** - Convenient 17-inch raised seat
- ✓ **Worry Free Enjoyment** - Thanks to Jacuzzi Inc's Lifetime Limited Warranty
- ✓ **Maximum Pain Relief** - Therapeutic water AND air jets to help you feel your best
- ✓ **Relax Fully** - All controls are within easy reach.
- ✓ **Personalized Massage** - New adjustable jet placement for pinpoint control. This tub is the first to offer a specialized foot massage experience. Its unique spinning motion provides optimal therapy to feet and legs. Best of all, you get it at no additional charge
- ✓ **No Hassle Installation** - Designed to fit in your existing tub space



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INSIDE
BACKFLOW PREVENTER/ROOF AVALANCHE
/BRICK DECAY/PEELING CEILING/MORE

38 tips, tricks, and answers to your home-improvement questions

Q My Phillips-head screwdriver can't get a good grip on many of my screws, even though it looks like it should fit. What's the story?
—VAL BARDAWIL, WORCESTER, MASS.

A You need a different screwdriver. Pozidriv screws, like the ones shown here, do look a lot like Phillips-head screws, but each recess has four extra notches, which prevent the bit (inset, right) from slipping out when torqued. Phillips bits (inset, left) are actually meant to back out when twisted hard and thereby save the screwhead from being snapped off. —THE EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPH BY MITCHELL FEINBERG

Our cast of veteran experts

TOM SILVA
General Contractor

NORM ABRAM
Master Carpenter

RICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Heating Expert

ROGER COOK
Landscape Contractor

KEVIN O'CONNOR
Host

There's a small puddle of water near my boiler. Fortunately, it seems to be coming not from the boiler but from an open-ended vertical pipe, like you might see on a water heater. How can I fix it?

TERENCE McCAFFERTY MANCHESTER, N.H.

Richard Trethewey solders a new backflow preventer onto a boiler's water-supply pipe. This crucial component protects the purity of the water coming into the house

PHOTOS: ANTHONY TIEU. (OPPOSITE PAGE, WHAT IS IT?) WENDELL T. WEBBER

RICHARD TRETHEWEY REPLIES: Sounds like you need to check the backflow preventer. This device, which I'm installing here, connects the water-supply pipe to the boiler and makes sure that water flows in one direction only—toward the boiler—whenever the heating system needs to be topped up with water.

A preventer can provide years of service without any problem, but if either of the two check valves inside the device becomes clogged with debris or a mineral buildup, it spits water into an open-ended vertical pipe. I suspect that's where your puddle comes from.

Although it's not an emergency, a clogged backflow preventer is not something to be ignored. Here's why: Normally a preventer just sits there, not doing a thing, until the system needs more water. Then, pressure on the supply side moves the water toward the boiler. But if that supply pressure ever drops for some reason—when the fire department opens a nearby hydrant, for example—the valves inside the preventer stop the water in the heating system from being sucked into, and contaminating, the supply pipes. That's why plumbing codes require a backflow preventer on hydronic heating systems, outdoor hose bibbs, and sprinkler systems.

To remove a malfunctioning preventer, shut off the water-supply valve and purge the heating system so that its water level is below the preventer. If it's connected to the supply pipe with a threaded fitting, use a pair of wrenches to back off the union nuts on both ends of the preventer. Then simply screw a new preventer of the same make onto the supply pipe. But if your unit has no threaded fittings, grab a hacksaw, cut off the old unit, and solder a new one onto the same spot.

What is it?

- A Back-support harness
- B Brush-whacking blade
- C Insulation stay
- D Support for duct bends

FOR THE ANSWER, SEE PAGE 98

Snow-stoppers

Last winter, after a heavy snowfall, we had an avalanche off our metal roof that landed on our deck with a giant thump. Nobody was hurt, thank goodness, but what can we do to keep this from happening again?

—RICHARD AND BARBARA BROWER KIMBALL, MICH.

NORM ABRAM REPLIES: This is a common problem with metal roofs in snowy areas. If the roof warms up enough to create a slippery layer of meltwater, the snow pack can avalanche off a roof without warning. The deeper the pack, the more dangerous it becomes.

I've also seen icy snow slide slowly off a roof so that it sticks out like a shelf or curls over the edge and hangs down like a limp mattress. When it finally falls, this kind of snow is just as damaging as a roof avalanche.

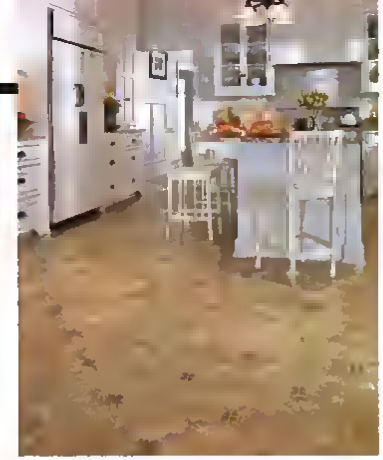
The solution to both fast- and slow-moving snow packs is to install snow guards or snow rails. They hold the snow on the roof, where it will do the least harm, and let it melt away when the weather warms up.

Traditional snow guards are small, fan-shaped pieces of metal, about 3 inches high, that are anchored to the roof so that the fans face the ridge. They're typically installed about 2 feet apart in staggered rows right above the exterior wall, a few feet back from the eaves.

These days, guards are made of cast or stamped metal and clear or colored polycarbonate plastic. They can be clamped, fastened, glued, or soldered in place, depending on the material the guards are made of and the type of roof you have, including rubber and shingled roofs.

Snow rails are metal bars positioned parallel to the eaves and a few inches above the roof surface, at minimum. In places prone to heavy snows, multiple bars can stand as much as 1 foot above the roof. Snow rails are more expensive than snow guards, but they're sturdier and leave no gaps for snow to slide through.

Whichever type of system you choose, installing one is a job for an experienced roofing or gutter contractor. Metal roofs are slippery, and you shouldn't take the risk of sliding off yours.



A sheet vinyl floor can be placed over any surface, even tile, as long as it's smooth, flat, and dry

Vinyl over tile?

Is it possible to lay sheet-vinyl flooring over the ceramic tiles in my kitchen? Flooring contractors tell me the tile has to be removed first.

—JANE KIELTY, BRICK, N.J.

TOM SILVA REPLIES: Sure, you can lay sheet vinyl without the hassle of busting out the tiles. But first you'll have to smooth out the floor using a portland-cement-based floor patch, such as Durock Fast Finish (usg.com). The reason for doing this is to prevent any imperfections in the floor, such as grout lines, missing tiles, and the like, from showing up on the surface of the vinyl.

The steps for prepping the floor are pretty straightforward. Remove any loose or broken tiles, clean the floor thoroughly, then mix up only as much patch as you can spread before it sets, in about 15 minutes. Apply the mix evenly with a straight-edge trowel between and over the tiles. In about 30 minutes, you or a pro can spread the vinyl adhesive and put down the flooring.

Great stuff

Of the many tools, materials, and other products that we discover every month, here are a few outstanding ones you should know about. —THE EDITORS

Blade runner

Accutrax pencil blade

Carbon-fiber-reinforced hard-graphite "blades" turn a utility knife into a precise, long-lasting carpenter's pencil that never needs sharpening. Three for $5. accutraxpencilblade.com

No-surprise shower temps

Delta Temp2O handshower

With its digital readout and colored LEDs, this handshower lets you know whether the water temperature is too hot (red!), too cold (blue!), or just right (magenta—*ahh!*). The LEDs need no batteries; they're powered by a tiny turbine spinning in the water flow. The same technology is available in showerheads and in valves for tubs and showers. Starting at $123. deltafaucet.com

It's a wrap

Fiberfix repair tape

When a tool handle snaps or a pipe leaks, make a strong, waterproof repair by soaking this polyurethane-saturated fiberglass-mesh strip in water and wrapping it around the break. Sets rock hard in 15 minutes. $8 for a 2-by-50-inch roll. fiberfix.com

Easy up

Werner Podium stepladder

This new fiberglass and aluminum unit is the first to have a wide standing platform and a built-in guardrail, allowing you to work safely and comfortably up to 10 feet off the ground. The 26-pound 6-foot model (shown) has a 4-foot-high platform and a 300-pound capacity. $120. wernerco.com

Crud buster

Briggs & Stratton SnowShteddar snowblower

Meet the first single-stage snowblower with serrated metal teeth. It can chew through the icy berms left by snowplows—obstacles that stop other single-stagers cold—and still does a great job of wiping pavement clean with its rubber paddles. Starting at $600. briggsandstratton.com

4-pound wonder

Dremel Ultra-Saw tool kit

Depending on which attachment you use, this versatile 7.5-amp mini saw can be used as a grinder, a flush-cutting saw, a tile cutter, a masonry saw, or a wood-cutting saw for sheet materials up to ¾ inch thick. Kit includes four cutting wheels. $129. dremel.com

PHOTOS (PENCIL BLADE, TAPE, AND SAW): COURTESY LISA SHIN

Bricks breaking down

My 1850 house sits on a brick foundation. The exposed bricks on the cellar side are flaking and leaving a fine red powder on the floor. Why is this happening, and can anything be done about it? The cellar itself is dry.

—RAY MacDONNEL, CHAPPAQUA, N.Y.

KEVIN O'CONNOR REPLIES: According to Brian Trimble, a vice president of engineering services and architectural outreach at the Brick Industry Association, you're describing a case of rising damp, when old bricks wick water out of the ground.

Trimble says that rising damp is a bad thing for two reasons. Wet bricks in cold climates can shatter or spall if the water inside them freezes. But it's more likely that your bricks are disintegrating for the second reason: salt crystallization. What happens is that water picks up dissolved salts from the ground and from the masonry itself and then deposits them in high concentrations just below the brick surface when the water evaporates on the wall's dry side. These salts grow in size as they crystallize inside the bricks, slowly breaking them down into powder.

If nothing is done, your bricks will continue to erode. But Trimble says that it won't become a structural issue until more than one-third of the wall is gone, which could take another 100 years or more.

The easiest way to slow down the deterioration is to keep the ground next to the foundation as dry as possible. Regrade around the foundation so that water flows away from the house. Make sure your gutters aren't leaking or overflowing, and run their downspout outlets to a dry well at least 10 feet from the house. If there are no gutters, now is a good time to install them.

The only sure way to halt rising damp is to create a capillary break—an air space—between the foundation and the ground. That requires digging a trench next to the foundation and down to the footing all around the house, installing a French drain along the outside of the footing, and placing a dimpled waterproofing membrane, such as Delta-MS (cosella-dorken.com), against the foundation from the drain up to ground level. This would be very expensive and disruptive, Trimble says, but it should save your old foundation from crumbling.

The crown on a corner cabinet, like the one above, is usually mitered at a 22½° angle. But when a molding face has a carved pattern, like the one at right, the exact location of each cut has to be carefully chosen.

Crown for a corner cabinet

We bought some crown molding with decorative carving on its face to mount on our kitchen cupboards, but we can't figure out how to cut the "odd" angles for the crown that sits above the corner cabinet. Can you help?

—SUNNIE AND DAVE ELLIS, JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

NORM ABRAM REPLIES: The way that you cut crown molding for cabinets is the same as cutting crown for walls. You rest the molding's top edge on the base of your miter saw and place the molding's bottom edge against the fence. Brace the molding in this sloped position as you make the cut.

Finding the blade angle isn't hard, either. Corner cabinets sit 45° from the rest of the cabinets mounted on the wall, so you will set the blade to cut a 22½° miter, half of 45°. Before you cut your crown, however, it's always a good idea to cut some scrap material and confirm that the blade setting is correct.

The complication here is the decorative carving in the molding's face. Basically, you have to match up the pattern at each miter, something that has to be done by eye. But if the pattern is not perfectly consistent, then it may be impossible to get it to match up exactly across each joint.

The best place to start is at the least visible inside corner, the way you would wallpaper a room, and work from there in one direction, matching the pattern at each joint.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 104

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PROJECT OF THE WEEK

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HOW TO **BUILD A TOOLBOX**

Photo: Wendell T. Webber

If your little builders inherited the DIY gene, they're more or less programmed to dive into Mom and Dad's tools. So maybe you should think about giving the handy helpers their own set—the better to get them involved (while keeping your precious collection from getting trashed).

This toolbox is just the thing to hold smaller, basic items that fit a young do-it-yourselfer's hands, including a hammer, handsaws, pliers, and screwdrivers. Building it is easy. The tools required are probably already in your stash, and the materials are readily available at a home center. The fun is in having something for everyone to do and getting in good practice for future projects.

You'll find all the tools and supplies necessary for this—and any—home project at The Home Depot nearest you.

For step-by-step instructions, go to thisoldhouse.com/project

Make sure to glue each joint and shoot a few brads into it to hold the joint tightly together. (For guidance on how to install crown on cabinets like these, go to thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2015.)

To vent or not to vent

We have turbine ventilators on our roof to help cool the attic during the summer. But what should I do with them in the winter? Some people tell me to close them up, while others say to let them spin.

—RICK BAKIES, SEYMOUR, CONN.

TOM SILVA REPLIES: Let them spin. An attic needs to exhaust heat just as much in the winter as it does in the summer. A cold attic means a cold roof, and a cold roof isn't going to form ice dams. And since cool air is dryer than warm air, ventilating your attic this way will reduce the chance of mold taking hold.

But you do have to make sure that there's a way for outside air to easily enter the attic and replace what the ventilator is sucking out. Open vents at the gables or at the roof eaves should be sufficient. Without those openings to provide makeup air from the outside, you risk depressurizing the attic and pulling warm air out of your house through openings in the attic floor. That would be a bad thing for your comfort, and for your heating bills.

Well-pump pressure

My house gets its water from a well. The pump in the basement has a gauge that shows we have a water pressure of 50 psi. Is there any way to increase it? My daughter says our pressure is noticeably less than the pressure in the homes of her friends with city water.

—DAVE GELLERICH, MANCHESTER, CONN.

RICHARD TRETHEWEY REPLIES: Residential systems are designed to function best at a pressure of 40 to 60 psi, so yours doesn't need adjusting. But if the pressure is important to your daughter, you may be able to bump it up, depending on the capacity of the switch that controls when the pump turns on and off. My only caution: Don't go higher than 60 psi. Here are the steps you need to follow.

The pump-pressure switch is a small rectangular box with rounded corners that's mounted to a pipe connected to the water supply. It will be near the pressure tank, with an electrical cable sprouting from each side.

Shut off the power to the switch, remove the cover, and examine the label inside. Look for the word *off* or *cutoff* and note the number next to it. If the number is 50, for 50 psi, that's the highest pressure your switch can handle. Replace the cover, turn the power back on, and decide whether it's worth calling a plumber to install a new switch that will boost the pressure by 10 psi. If this doesn't seem worth it, you can tell your daughter that higher water pressure increases the risk of leaks and of water hammer—the pipe banging that occurs when a valve is shut—both of which you'd rather not have to deal with. But if your pressure switch goes 60 psi or higher, you're in luck. You can ramp up the pressure.

Under the cover, you'll see some wire terminals and either one or two threaded metal posts, each surrounded by a spring held in place with a nut. If your switch has one post, rotate its nut clockwise four complete turns. If your switch has two posts, turn only the nut on the taller post four complete clockwise turns. Replace the cap, turn the power back on, and check the gauge pressure.

If the reading is over 60 psi, subtract 50 from that reading and divide the result by 4. That will tell you exactly how much each turn of the nut changes the psi. Now turn off the power again, remove the cap, and crank the nut counterclockwise by the number of turns needed to bring the gauge's needle down to 60.

You'll probably find your pump is working a bit longer than it was before. But, hopefully, your daughter will appreciate what a handy dad she has and won't feel so envious of her city-water friends.

When a house gets its water from a well, water pressure is controlled by an adjustable switch, like the one in the gray box at right.

Peeling popcorn

The popcorn ceilings in the rooms we remodeled 12 years ago have cracked and in some places hang down about an inch from the drywall. More cracks appear every year. What should we do?

—CAROLE DAVID, SOUTH HADLEY, MASS.

TOM SILVA REPLIES: It's hard to say why there's so much cracking, but a failure this widespread points to something done incorrectly when the ceiling was installed.

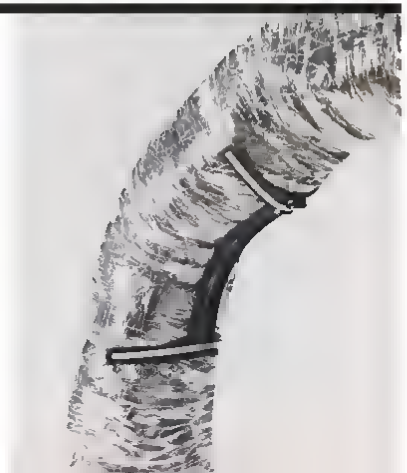
Here's the good news: Your ceiling doesn't have asbestos, its use in textured ceilings was banned in 1977, so you won't have to hire an abatement contractor to get rid of it. Even so, it does need to go. With cracking this extensive and still ongoing, you should cut your losses and take all that texture off.

It won't be hard. Start by clearing everything out of the room and laying a drop cloth on the floor to catch the debris. Then dampen the ceiling with a garden sprayer and let it soak for a few minutes. Now go to one of the spots where the texture is cracked or drooping, slip a wide taping knife between it and the drywall, and scrape off the popcorn with long strokes. If you encounter any stubborn spots, hit them with more water, let them soak, and try again with a putty knife. Take extra care around the drywall joints. You don't want to tear any joint tape.

Once the ceiling is clean and the debris has been removed, you can hire a drywall contractor to spray texture back onto the ceiling. But I'd recommend that you skim-coat your now-smooth ceilings with joint compound, which sticks tenaciously to drywall and takes paint nicely.

What is it?

Support for duct bends
The Smart Flow Elbow clamps onto flexible ducts to keep them from kinking and choking off air flow where they bend. Works with ducts from 4 to 16 inches in diameter. Two for $20; battledoor.com



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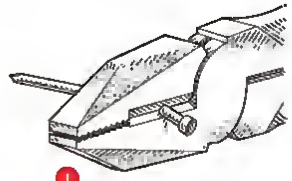
Norm's tricks of the trade

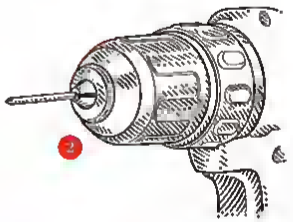
No matter how carefully I hand-nail shoe molding, it often splits. Can I do anything to prevent this?

—JASON STUTTS PROSPERITY S.C.

A It's always a good idea to drill a pilot hole before nailing trim with a hammer, especially if the wood is thin or the nail is close to the edge. But with this trick my father taught me, you won't need to go hunting for the right-size bit. Just use one of the nails.

First, cut off the nailhead so that the drill's jaws can get a tight grip on the shaft [1]. Then stick the cut end into the chuck, snug up the jaws [2], and drill away with the nail's factory-cut point. You'll get a perfectly sized pilot hole every time.





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COVER *See the listing for "Fresh Start."*

NOME SOLUTIONS *(pp. 17–22)* Next-gen headrests. *Thanks to* Terry Cralle, The Better Sleep Council; bettersleep.org; Michael Penny, Savvy Rest; savvyrest.com; Budget redo: **Homeowner's blog:** DIY Showoff; diyshowoff.com

BEFORE + AFTER KITCHEN: Supersizing the island *(pp. 26–29)* **Architect:** Kuhn Riddle Architects, Amherst, MA; 413-259-1630; kuhnriddle.com. **General contractor:** Alain Mollard Greenfield, MA; thehouseonthehillbnb.com. **Cabinets and island:** Mascatos Woodcraft Company, Chicopee, MA; 413-594-4212; mascaroswoodcraft.net. **Interior designer:** Elisha Beaman House, Amherst, MA; 413-253-3854. **Paint:** OC-44 Misty Air (walls); HC-115 Georgian Green (cabinets and wainscot); and HC-113 Lousburg Green (beadboard backsplash and children's stools); benjaminmoore.com. **Windows:** pella.com. **Microwave:** ge.com. **Knobs and pulls:** sirodesigns.com. **Countertops:** The Stone Cobblers, Worcester, MA; thestonecobblers.com. **Faucet:** moen.com. **Range:** vikingrange.com. **Range hood:** broan.com. **Children's stools:** landofnod.com

BEFORE + AFTER BATH: Brighter and sleeker *(pp. 33–34)* **Homeowner's blog:** greenthumbwhiteapron.com. **Paint:** SW 7004 Snowbound; sherwin-williams.com. **Tile:** Biltmore Niles (floor); Imperial Branco (wall); and Water (hump-out); thetileshop.com. **Shower fixtures:** signaturehardware.com

PAINT IDEAS: Color-washed plank wall *(p. 45)* *Thanks to* Mark Chamberlain Fine Painting, New York, NY; 212-465-2558; markchamberlainpainting.com

PHOTOSHOP REDO: Spiffing up a 1950s Colonial *(p. 52)* *Thanks to* Daniel Condalore and Jason Hanrahan, Mode Architecture, Red Bank, NJ; 732-800-1958; mode-arch.com. **Stone veneer:** Ply Gem stone masonry veneer, shadow ledgestone, in Hampton; plygem.com. **Barn light:** Mason RLM wall mount outdoor oil-rubbed bronze dark sky downlight; homedepot.com. **Hardware:** 2115 Lexington entry handle set, lock; com. **Siding:** ColorPlus smooth lap siding in Countrylane Red; jamesshardie.com

FRESH START *(pp. 64–71)* **Architect:** Ton-Lo Design Noricross, GA; 917-215-6184; tonlodesign.com. **General contractor:** South Peak Construction, Atlanta, GA; 404-983-4807; southpeak.org. **Structural engineering:** Palmer Engineering Company, Tucker, GA; 770-908-9908; pecga.com. **Paint:** SW 7590 Red Obsession (front door); SW 7505 Manor House (windows and shutters); SW 7757 High Reflective White (siding and exterior trim); SW 6990 Caviar (interior window trim); and SW 7674 Peppercorn (kitchen base cabinets and playroom accent wall); sherwin-williams.com. Mudroom: Specialty Chalk Board (accent wall); tustoleum.com. **Floor stain:** varathane.com. Dining area: **Pendant light fixture:** directfurniturewatlanta.com. Kitchen: **Subway tile:** Color Collection, homedepot.com. **Knobs and pulls, peninsula cabinets and butcher block top:** ikea.com. **Range:** frigidaire.com. **Pendant light fixtures:** Kudzu Art Glass, Decatur, GA; 404-373-6458; kudzuartglass.com. **Sink:** Blanco Precis, faucetdirect.com. **Faucet:** Delta DeLuca, deltafaucet.com. **Runner:** dashandarberi.com. Master bath: **Faucets:** Danze Amalfi, homedepot.com. **Wall tile:** Calypso Blanco Ceramic Wall Tile, 6" x 18", flooranddecor.com. **Tub:** Boyce Acrylic Tub, 61", signaturehardware.com. **Shower fixtures and sinks:** American Standard, homedepot.com. **Glass shower wall:** echoglass.com. **Picture ledge:** Metal Picture Ledge, 4 feet, westelm.com

LIFE CHANGING TIPS FOR A MORE ORGAHIZED HOME *(pp. 72–77)* *Thanks to* Jill Banks, National Association of Professional Organizers; napo.net

TOH TV *(pp. 78–83)* *Thanks to* Lumber Liquidators; lumberliquidators.com. The Home Depot; homedepot.com. House of Antique Hardware; houseofantiquehardware.com. Quikrete; quikrete.com. **Interior designer:** K. Marshall Design, Wenham, MA; 978-468-7199; kmdkitchens.com. **Architect:** Sally DeGan, SpaceCraft Architecture, Lexington, MA; 781-674-2100; spacecraftarch.com. **Front-door paint:** Delft Blue 4003; inspiritsofeurope.com. **Powder room wallpaper:** Shell Toile, Blue on Pineapple; brunschwig.com. **Art above mantels:** Powers Gallery, Acton, MA; 978-263-5105; powersgallery.com.

ASK THIS OLD HOUSE *(pp. 93–100)* **Q+A. Bricks breaking down:** *Thanks to* Brian Trimble, Brick Industry Association, Reston, VA; 703-620-0010; bia.org.

SAVE THIS OLD HOUSE *(p. 106)* *Thanks to* Dawn Smith, Van Billings Real Estate, Dolgeville, NY; vanbillingsrealestate.com.

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SAVETHISOLDHOUSE

Early Sears kit house in the Queen Anne style!

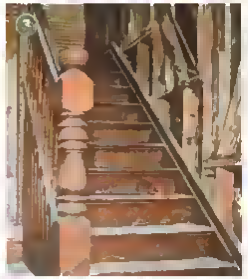
PRICE $32,500
LOCATION Henderson, New York
CONTACT Dawn Smith, 607-435-8243

THE HISTORY When a young sailor from Henderson named Melbourn Kilby took a job with a local captain on Lake Ontario, he may have had his eye on more than just a paycheck. After only a few years, he married the captain's daughter, Lena. The couple moved to Chicago, where Melbourn went into business as a tailor. He befriended Alvah Roebuck and Richard Sears, who were in the early stages of forming Sears, Roebuck and Co. After returning to Henderson and having a son, Melbourn and Lena built this Queen Anne in 1894 using an early version of a kit that Sears, Roebuck was just starting to sell. Fittingly, the house was delivered in pieces aboard a ship that docked in nearby Henderson Harbor. The family lived in the house until 1902, when they moved to Florida. The place has had numerous owners since and has been vacant for the past 20 years.

WHY SAVE IT? The 2,300-square-foot home retains many original features, including an elaborate three-story turret and a decorated portico. The interior has its charming pine staircase, pine floors, and oak moldings and doors.

WHAT IT NEEDS The house has water and electric service but needs new systems and a new roof. Most of the siding can be salvaged, but some floor joists should be reinforced. The interior is largely gutted down to the studs, and most of the windows are missing. Henderson is a town of 1,360, about an hour north of Syracuse. As one of the earliest kit houses ever offered, this gem is a rare piece of Americana, well worth saving. —PAUL HOPE

1] The four-bedroom house sits on four-fifths of an acre and abuts hayfields in the surrounding countryside. 2] The detailed portico is an example of the intricate mass-produced trim that made kit houses so popular. 3] The original pine staircase is intact and awaits refinishing. 4] The front door retains its brass knob, escutcheon plate, and turn-style doorbell.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY, PAGE 101

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